

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC020558                                    |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Ceri Evans                                  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full  |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Residential special school (>295 days/year) |

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | Jackie Davenport |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 20/02/2014       |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 13/11/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

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|--|---------------|
| Previous inspection                      | good progress |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | none          |

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

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>outstanding</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------|

Young people are making excellent progress from their starting point. They are achieving positive outcomes across all aspects of their lives. Most noticeably in their education, confidence, self-esteem and preparation for independence. Individual support packages, assessment and transition work enables young people to learn new skills which will maximise their future opportunities.

A strong feature of the home is the warm and affectionate relationship between staff and young people. Vulnerable and complex young people appear happy, relaxed and settled. They thrive in the knowledge that their interests, talents and individuality is recognised and fully supported by staff who know them very well. As a result young people enjoy positive attachments, feel valued, respected and are understood by those responsible for their care.

Parents and stakeholders express consistently positive views about the home and the care young people receive. They praise the dedication and commitment of staff who provide young people with every opportunity to engage in activities that may not otherwise be available to them. They say that young people are happy and progressing well. This is further demonstrated in comments such as 'my child is very happy, which makes us happy' and 'we are very impressed with the care and stimulation our child is receiving'.

The home is well managed by an experienced and dedicated manager who places the wellbeing of young people at the heart of her practice. The home is well-resourced by staff who have the necessary experience, skills and training to effectively care for young people with disabilities. The home promotes inclusion at all times and ensures that young people are given every opportunity to thrive regardless of the challenges they may face.

The home demonstrate a commitment to driving the service forward and continues to provide excellent care to young people. However, one good practice recommendation has been made as part of this inspection. This relates to maintaining up to date records on young people's files. This shortfall has not had a negative impact on the outcomes of young people.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The privately owned school is registered as a children's home to accommodate 22 children and young people. The school provides education and care to children and young people who present with severe learning disabilities, challenging behaviours, autistic spectrum disorder and sensory impairment.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 20/02/2014      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 20/11/2013      | Full            | outstanding          |
| 14/02/2013      | Interim         | good progress        |
| 22/06/2012      | 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):

- there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. This specifically relates to ensuring that all documents on young peoples files are up to date.(NMS 22.1)

## Inspection judgements

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

Young people are achieving improved outcomes and making excellent progress. The home has had a significant impact on young people, particularly in relation to their social skills, confidence and developing a positive self-view. They are respected as individuals with their own personalities and unique character traits. Consequently, young people are happy, settled and blossoming as individuals.

Relationships within the home are extremely positive with young people and staff sharing strong relationships with each other. Young people who may have experienced social isolation prior to placement are now thriving and enjoying positive relationships with their peers. They have also made significant progress with their behaviour. Aggression towards others has reduced over time and young people are more settled in the company of others. One social worker commented 'my young person had behavioural issues when she first arrived but she has matured with the guiding hand of teachers and staff, into a polite and well-mannered young person'.

Young people live in a setting that provides an alternative to mainstream education. A '24 hour' curriculum provides structure and consistency, and empowers them to make significant progress in their confidence, social integration, life skills and communication. The continuity of approaches across both settings enables young people to feel secure in their learning. They know what is expected on a day to day basis and thrive from the structure and routines put in place by teaching and social care staff. As a result, young people who have experienced poor attendance in the past are now flourishing. One parent commented 'we visited lots of residential schools during the planning process, but this is by far the best. Our child is very happy and is progressing well'.

Young people make excellent progress with their communication skills. They have access to specialist support from speech and language professionals and occupational therapists, and are provided with communications methods, specific to their individual needs. Every effort is made by staff to communicate effectively with young people and careful consideration is given to identifying the most appropriate method. As a result, young people engage confidently with staff and are able to express their wishes and feelings.

Young people are encouraged to participate in a range of activities that provides enjoyment and helps build confidence. The home maintains excellent links with disability groups, clubs and other facilities in the local community. Popular pastimes include tag rugby, horse riding and swimming. In addition to community activities, the setting offers young people with excellent opportunities to participate in a variety of outdoor interests, such as growing vegetables, learning about wildlife and outdoor play. These opportunities enhance living experiences and enjoyment for young

people.

Young people enjoy good health irrespective of their complex needs. Through making healthy diet choices, participating in physical activities and having prompt access to health services children benefit from an overall improved quality of life.

Excellent contact is maintained between the home and young people's families. Supporting significant relationships for young people is seen as extremely important. Parents visit on a regular basis and young people are supported to visit their own family homes. Annual celebrations, such as summer barbecues offer a social opportunity for families to enjoy a fun day with their children and staff. This means that young people benefit from meaningful contact which fully preserves their identity, heritage and sense of belonging.

Individuals in this home are very well prepared for their transition to adulthood. Young people are gaining life skills such as cooking, washing and budgeting. Taking their starting points into consideration the progress young people have made is exceptional. For example, at point of placement, one young person was not able use a knife and fork and would prefer to eat in isolation. Staff worked hard to promote integration and they supported this by setting small achievable targets. This enabled the young person to feel secure whilst learning new social skills. As a result, he now enjoys dining with others and can now confidently use a knife and fork

## **Quality of care**

## **outstanding**

Staff work hard to develop very strong and meaningful relationships with young people. They express genuine affection and warmth, and are extremely dedicated to the young people in their care. The team have a thorough understanding of complex needs and have consistently high aspirations for all young people. Care plans are kept up to date and are personalised to the specific needs of individuals. Information is a true reflection of young people, therefore staff are fully equipped to deliver high quality care.

Young people live in a person centred learning environment and receive full staff support to attend and achieve in their education. Staff take full account of the varying needs of young people and nurture individual talents and strengths in order to promote best outcomes. Strong and effective communication between the home and on-site school provides young people with a well-rounded and holistic learning environment. Seamless links between both provisions ensure young people enjoy a range of opportunities to learn. These include academic, social and vocational opportunities. As a result, young people are positively engaged in learning and are proud of their achievements.

The home has effective arrangements in place to support young people is culture, identity and religious beliefs. Staff ensure young people retain their heritage and

culture through preserving routines, customs and traditions that are important to them. Furthermore, specific training and collaborative practices with parents further enable staff to develop skills and competence in promoting diversity. As a result young people feel proud of their heritage, which impact positively on their health, sense of self and well-being.

Young people thrive in a child-centred and individualised environment which is tailored to their specific needs. Staff encourage young people to feel good about themselves and all their achievements, no matter how big or small are recognised and acknowledged. For example, young people's achievements are celebrated in a weekly award ceremony. This is something young people look forward to and thoroughly enjoy. Photographs, art work and certificates are proudly displayed around the home and school. This further demonstrates that staff genuinely care and take a keen interest in the lives of young people.

Young people contribute their views and opinions in a variety of ways. Some are able to work through their communication passports while others use sign or symbols. The views of young people are consistently prioritised and acted upon by staff. Regular group meetings and daily interactions encourage young people to influence all aspects of their care. Young people also have access to advocates and other external professionals to ensure their views are listened to and acted upon. These arrangements help young people to effect change in the home, influence what is important in their lives and enable them to have control over their lives.

The setting is a homely, safe and a stimulating environment where young people can maximise their potential. The provision has an excellent range of indoor and outdoor facilities to maximise learning. These include an on-site hydrotherapy pool, a soft play area, a large recreational hall and other play areas. These provide ample opportunity for young people to play and have fun. In addition to onsite facilities, staff encourage young people to take part in community groups and support regular visits to places of interests. These activities further enhance young people's confidence and help them to develop new life skills.

Young people benefit from living in a safe and well maintained home. The spacious property provides young people with sufficient privacy or they can spend time together in communal rooms. The setting is well designed and fully equipped to meet the specific needs of young people. Photographs, memorabilia and other visual tools are displayed around the home. This helps young people maintain their identity, settle in and feel comfortable.

**Keeping children and young people safe** **outstanding**

The home makes an outstanding provision for safeguarding young people. Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. Parents confirmed that they have every confidence in the homes' ability to safeguard young people. One parent commented 'I have no concerns about my child's safety'. Social workers also comment extremely highly about the care and attention that staff give young people to ensure that their safety and wellbeing remains paramount at all times. Managers, teachers and care staff all play a role in keeping young people safe from harm. They are confident in all areas of child protection and have the necessary skills and knowledge to keep young people safe

The welfare and safety of young people is always the most important consideration for staff. They have strong links with other agencies who provide access to up-to-date advice and guidance in order to ensure everyday practice protects young people from harm. High staffing ratios ensure appropriate support, supervision and monitoring. Staff are consistently clear about what action they would take in response to any arising concerns, such what to do if a young person goes missing. This means that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and give the safety and well-being of young people the highest priority at all times.

The manager ensures that staff attend regular safeguarding training that specifically include the vulnerabilities of disabled children. This means that staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to safely care for young people. Staff know young people well and are attuned to their individual needs and behaviours. They respond quickly to potential triggers and take immediate action to reduce anxiety, stress or discomfort.

Staff are trained in restraint techniques, which are only used as a last resort. Incidences of physical restraint have been to a low level and professionally managed. Records are clear and the manager ensures that interventions are evaluated and carefully monitored and tracked. This ensures that physical restraint remains appropriate at all times.

Positive behaviour management plans are individual and effective. Records and risk assessments take full account of young people's triggers and clearly highlight strategies on how to manage known risks. Plans are reviewed and updated in response to incidents and robust communication within the team ensures that everyone is always aware of presenting issues or concerns. Staff are consistent in their approach and clear boundaries are in place. This means that young people understand what is expected and as a result negative behaviour has reduced.

The home is a physically safe and appropriately secure. A designated member of the senior management team is responsible for all health and safety checks, all of which are up to date and fully meet requirements. The provider has robust recruitment arrangements to ensure all staff are vetted and checked prior to the commencement of their employment. Visitors are asked to provide appropriate identification and are monitored during their visit. These measures further enhance the security of the

building and creates a safer environment for all.

## **Leadership and management**

## **outstanding**

The home is exceptionally well managed. The Registered Manager has worked in the home over twenty years and has managed the provision since 2000. She holds the relevant social care and management qualifications and is committed to the young people in her care. The manager is extremely proud of young people's progress and can detail the significance of their achievements from their starting points. She conveys a great deal of passion for the work they do with young people.

The manager is clear about the home admission process and stringent matching procedures are in place to ensure the individual needs of young people are met. Senior managers, health and education professionals are fully involved in the admission process. The needs of young people who already live in the home are carefully considered before any agreement is made about future placements. The ethos of the home is to ensure that all young people enjoy placement stability and are able to achieve their full potential. The whole team are committed to this and as a result young people enjoy established placement and are making excellent progress.

Staff receive a high level of quality training which is specific to individual needs of young people in the home. For example, staff have completed Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) training, which help them learn new ways of communicating with young people. All mandatory courses such as safeguarding, physical restraint and health and safety are updated regularly. This means that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to safely care for vulnerable and complex young people.

Staff benefit from regular supervision which enables them to reflect upon their practice and recognise their strengths and areas of development. Staff are very well supported and feel that good management support enables them to operate successfully as a team. There is a clear learning culture in place and new staff benefit from a thorough induction programme that enables them to develop the necessary skills to fulfil their role and carry out their responsibilities safely. Staff are supportive of each other, very knowledgeable and work well as part of a team. This means that young people are well cared for by informed and suitably qualified team.

The manager completes an annual development plan that clearly identifies goals, targets and aspirations for the young people in the home. The plan is realistic yet challenging and serves as a positive indicator of the manager's commitment to driving the service forward. A location risk assessment has been completed to a high standard. As part of this process the manager has consulted with the police and

children services responsible for safeguarding along with other sources. This demonstrates the home ability to develop, work in accordance with regulation and keep young people safe.

Effective and robust monitoring systems are in place to ensure the continued improvement of the service. For example, the manager oversees the effectiveness of the service through internal audits, monthly file reviews and detailed regulation 33 and regulation 34 reports. The manager ensures that all matters arising from routine monitoring are addressed.

Young people's written records are well maintained, securely stored and provide a detailed picture of young people's needs, development and progress. However, this inspection has identified one minor shortfall in relation to records. This relates to ensuring that all Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and looked after children reviews are kept on file. This shortfall has had no impact on the safety and wellbeing of young people and the information was made available to the inspector upon request.

## 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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