

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC020558
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	Overley Hall School Limited
Responsible individual	Anita Brown
Registered manager	Jackie Davenport
Inspector	Christy Wannop

Inspection date	21/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC020558

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make terrific progress in relation to their starting points. Their care is nurturing, individual and child centred. Parents and placing authorities are unanimously positive about their experience.
- Constructive partnership working with parents, school and therapeutic staff and also with placing authorities is effectively focused on children's needs.
- Children enjoy fulfilling educational opportunities at the organisation's outstanding school.
- Relationships between staff and children are enabling, respectful, affectionate and fun.
- Opportunities for children to make choices, communicate and participate are maximised in daily care and result in positive well-being.
- The comprehensive safeguarding approach to individual safety, child protection, recruitment and the environment means that risks are minimised and children are free from unnecessary harm.
- A wide range of healthy, enjoyable social and leisure pursuits expands children's horizons and enriches their lives.
- Leadership is inspirational. Both the proprietor and the registered manager are dedicated, skilled, insightful individuals who have the confidence of the staff, children and families.
- Continuing weakness in the implementation of the behaviour management policy, physical intervention recording and managerial monitoring affects the service's established outstanding judgement.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and the child's placing authority consents in writing to the monitoring or surveillance. (Regulation 24(1)(a)(b))	31/03/2017
The registered person must prepare and implement a policy ('the behaviour management policy') which sets out the measures of control, discipline and restraint which may be used in relation to children in the home. They must ensure that, within 48 hours of the use of the measure, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so ('the authorised person') has spoken to the user about the measure; and has signed the record to confirm it is accurate; and within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35(1)(b)(3)(i)(ii)(c))	31/03/2017
The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children ('a quality of care review') at least once every 6 months. (Regulation 45(1))	31/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- ensure best use of information from internal monitoring to ensure continuous improvement, with particular reference to physical intervention and to analysis of children's progress. (the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- put systems in place so that all staff receive supervision of their practice from an appropriately qualified and experienced professional, which allows them to

reflect on their practice and the needs of the children assigned to their care. (the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This privately owned residential school is registered as a children's home to accommodate 22 children and young people who have severe learning disabilities and sensory impairment, challenging behaviours and autism spectrum disorder. Young adults may stay beyond the age of 18 to complete their education. Currently three of the 20 residents are over 18. A completely separate new residential home for young adults, registered with the Care Quality Commission, also operates within the school grounds.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
03/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/11/2014	Full	Outstanding
20/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
<p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</p>	<p>Good</p>
<p>Children progress in large and small steps towards targets that promote their independence and link to their educational objectives. These range from trying new foods and eating healthily, to toilet training and self-help or social skills, expanding vocabulary and improving concentration and behaviour. A social worker described impressive progress for their child, who: ‘has made great strides in pro-social behaviour while there and the placement is responsible for this progress.’</p> <p>Care is uniquely individualised and children’s needs are assessed, care planned and reviewed systematically. An associated professional described smooth systems for care planning and review:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Young people all have their own individual plans, tailored to meet and support their needs, depending on their level of development. During meetings, the young person’s best interests are paramount; parents’ wishes and feelings are always respected and valued.</p> <p>A young person said that he found the home was ‘different in a good way’ to his previous placement.</p> <p>Strong, respectful relationships between care and education staff mean that children benefit from an ethos that promotes consistency and quality in all areas of their lives. Social and educational achievements are equally valued. A placing social worker said:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The residential nature of the school means that a 24-hour curriculum is offered to this pupil; this consistent approach appears to be successful in managing behaviours and reducing anxiety.</p> <p>Children enjoy, they achieve and they have fun at their school and home. They have great opportunities to build relationships, try new experiences and build skills. They experience an expanded world and develop as respected members of the school, home and wider society.</p> <p>Children have good healthcare and lead healthy lifestyles. Services for physical, emotional and mental health are well coordinated. Support from in-house therapeutic services, such as occupational and speech and language therapy, ensures a holistic, skilled approach to meeting children’s needs. Psychology services have previously been employed, but are not currently part of the offer. The service has worked hard to reduce unnecessary dependence on medication.</p>	

One social worker reported that: 'They have sensitively challenged the medication regime that the young person came to the placement with and this has been reduced greatly.' Parents have made suggestions about improving local general practitioner services for their children and the registered manager is pursuing this.

Relationships with staff are affectionate, safe and, most of all, fun. Staff think deeply about children's ability to make choices. They encourage children to communicate, think and understand their world through communication aids and social stories. They particularly helped one young person through a bereavement by their creative, sensitive support. Staff maximise opportunities to help children participate in decisions about their daily lives. This is reflected in good levels of well-being, comfort and happiness. A parent commented: 'They integrate them into society and socialise them.'

The building is not ideal, and parents have made comments about outdated toilet facilities and stuffy upper floors. Despite the constraints of a historic building, children's home life is rich and personal to their needs. This residential school does not have the feel of an institution. The wonderful outdoor space and additional resources offered at the school mean that the children are not bored. A placing social worker described 'a wealth of activities' on offer, with holidays, discos in the community, celebrations, adventurous leisure pursuits and sports. One parent said:

The staff are kind, respectful and thoughtful towards my boys and the experiences they have had in the short space of time they have been there have been much more than we could have offered them at home.

The manager and staff have worked hard this year to move a significant number of young people on to adult services, some to the organisation's home for adults in the grounds. One placing social worker reported their satisfaction with the way that the organisation prepared for and planned this transition. They said that this had positive results for the young person. Another social worker described strong preparation for independence: 'The young people are given opportunities to further develop their independent living skills, as well as employment and training.' A parent said: 'My son is encouraged to develop his skills for adulthood.'

Parents are equal partners in the care of their children. They are welcomed and respected. Staff support these relationships, and close communication keeps parents feeling valued. A social worker said that staff: 'also facilitate home visits on a regular basis. They are always flexible and adapt to the needs of the family.' Parents are very positive. They are the best source of evidence about their children's progress. One parent said, 'Can't improve on perfection'. Another said of their child: 'He is a different child since starting there. He has come on so much and the staff are brilliant with him. I feel it's really a home from home for him.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
<p>Children are safe at the school. Risk is well managed through shared and agreed risk assessments. Parents report a good balance of protection and enabling a healthy childhood, with developmentally appropriate risk taking. A system of rigorous checks on the building, equipment, staff recruitment and activities for staff and children keeps the environment safe. Children benefit from individualised emergency evacuation plans. All children’s bedroom doors have alarms, to alert staff when children leave their rooms. This is not subject to consent by the placing authority, although it is clearly described as a safeguarding measure in the home’s statement of purpose and in children’s risk assessments.</p> <p>High staffing levels and constant supervision mean that children are unlikely to go missing. Staff recognise children’s greater vulnerability and take care to protect children who may injure themselves, or who may be at risk from stronger, bigger or more powerful children. The combination of children in living groups takes account of this influence and need for individual growth, protection and development. One independent reviewing officer is clear about the impact that this service has. He notes that the child: ‘appears to be happier, less anxious and more emotionally contained. He is developing meaningful relationships.’</p> <p>Staff manage behaviour well. Parents describe how their children, previously anxious and angry, sometimes uncontrollable, are transformed. One said, ‘Within six months I had a completely new child.’ Staff keep children busy and plan activities to prevent boredom. They think carefully about children’s sensory needs and anxiety levels. They communicate well about changes to routines, so that children learn to keep calm and understand what is happening. Angry or anxious and unpredictable outbursts are defused where possible. Restraint is sometimes necessary, and the staff are trained in an approved scheme for this. Advanced techniques, such as floor restraints, are sometimes used, and there is regular monitoring and communication with the training provider about this. Recording and monitoring of restraint, however, still does not always show that the registered person has spoken to the staff member using the restraint, or that they have taken a view of the necessity, effectiveness and proportionality of the restraint.</p> <p>Children’s behaviour management plans are also not clear about the use of the school sensory room, with a closed door, as a restraint for a few children, across school and care. There is no concern for children’s safety during these restraints and at other times children will choose to go to the room as a self-calming technique and leave the door open, or choose to close the door. The behavioural management policy is not clear about when staff should use the room, or decide to close the door, constituting restraint. Policy does not detail where this strategy fits with the organisation’s approved scheme of restraint, or how it should be recorded</p>	

and monitored. Management monitoring does not currently demonstrate that it is an effective strategy, or show a reducing pattern of use. There is a risk that this practice will develop outside proper governance processes and will not benefit children.

Staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and are well trained. The ethos of the school is one of protection, including safe tablet and internet use. Placing authorities say that staff and managers are 'open and approachable' and communicate transparently about any issues. One parent spoke of the trust she felt:

The staff listen to us and we have built up good relationships with them and nothing has ever been hidden from us. What we hear on our nightly phone calls is always what has been reported in their books and we value the open and honest communication.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
<p>Effective and inspirational leadership from the proprietor and registered manager has ensured a consistently high standard of care and operational management at the school and home. The registered manager became the registered manager in 2000, after many years working directly with children there. She has a level five diploma in Leadership for health and social care and children and young people and knows children, parents and staff very well. The organisation is beginning to think about succession planning and senior governance arrangements. There is no deputy, and the founder and proprietor is also the responsible individual, directly involved in the management of the school and home.</p> <p>The service has weathered unusual pressures well this year, and this has led to some emerging weakness. There has been an unusually high number of children moving on to adult placements and also new children arriving. These transitions in and out have been very positive, but have taken considerable managerial time to coordinate. A similarly high number of newly recruited staff undertaking induction has also affected the manager's ability to progress the home's development plan and also to sustain improvement in the one previous recommendation for recording and monitoring of physical intervention. External monitors have also commented on this. The rigor and frequency of management monitoring has slipped. Only one formal review of the quality of care took place in the last twelve months, instead of two as required. Staff have had irregular formal recorded supervision in this period.</p> <p>Despite this, a clear leadership focus on children keeps the service, as experienced</p>	

by children and their parents, at a very high standard. Experienced, skilled, committed senior leaders mean that this is a service that is constantly thinking about how to improve children's lives. A placing authority expressed confidence that care is well planned and charted: 'Regular care planning meetings are held at the school with parents between CIC reviews to ensure that progress is maintained and any issues addressed at an early stage.' The organisation is still working towards a comprehensive system of assessment and review for all children.

Consistency for children through permanent staffing is prioritised and the use of temporary or agency staff is avoided. The registered person has worked hard to recruit the right staff and has used creative means of selecting the best candidates, including involving children in observations on shift before appointment. Teamwork has a high value. Staff have shadowed their opposite shifts to learn and establish best practice between the teams of people who work with children. A social worker said: 'The staff team has worked hard to get to know the child and offer effective support.'

Staff are energetic, child focused and imaginative. They feel well supported, valued, well trained and listened to, particularly about their training needs. They say their line managers are incredibly supportive and accessible for informal discussions about children and care practice and report an: 'amazing company to work for – really caring staff team'. All staff who should have it have achieved the required relevant qualification in working with children, or are enrolled to achieve this.

Staff enthusiasm and care is palpable. Parents recognise that the positive changes in their children's lives are due to staff input. One said:

This has happened because the staff and management have worked hard, listened to us and have the confidence, specialist training and the experience to move my boys forward.

The registered person advocates on behalf of children, and challenges parents and placing authorities when necessary to do the best for the children. Placing authorities say that they are 'impressed' with the level of communication, support and effective management at the service. Social workers say that they see the change in children's demeanour and social skills, and how well they become able to interact. For example: 'The young people are cared for exceptionally well and their wishes and feelings are always respected.' This is a unique service and it has the capacity for continued growth and development, and improvement towards excellence.

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 that 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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