

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC030951
<b>Inspection date</b>	23/11/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Jackie Callaghan
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20/01/2011
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## 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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This is a large children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to 30 children who are aged between four and 17 years. The children have a visual impairment, learning and physical disabilities, or sensory impairment. This establishment is owned by a large national charity.

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

Young people make excellent progress both socially and with their education. They enjoy varied opportunities to engage in hobbies and activities. As a result, young people improve their social skills and increase in confidence. Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff team as well as with each other. An external professional commented, 'this is an absolutely fabulous provision that cares for the young people exceptionally well'.

Young people are safe and know staff are concerned for their welfare. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff; this is because there are clear boundaries that are consistent with good childcare. The management understand their current strengths and weaknesses and show a sound capacity to improve the outcomes for young people. One recommendation in relation to equality and diversity has been raised.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure young people receive personalised care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity. This specifically refers to sexuality. (NMS 2.1)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people receive a service that recognises their personal needs, cultural background, and personal identity including issues of gender, faith and disability while promoting tolerance. Staff always makes every effort to understand and embrace difference demonstrating this in their day-to-day practice by giving

importance to even the smallest issues that young people raise. Young people live in a caring and supportive home environment that encourages and enables them to make significant, meaningful progress across all areas of their life. Young people feel thoroughly integrated into the home because of the highly personalised care and excellent levels of consultation. Young people are leading healthy lifestyles. They have a varied diet and are encouraged to become involved in a range of physical activities. A parent said, 'exceptional care has been provided to my son; he has made steady progress and he has a better social life than I do'.

Young people receive regular contact with family, friends and others who are significant to them. This helps them to maintain and develop appropriate relationships with people who will be important to them into adulthood and beyond. Young peoples' attendance at school is excellent. The staff promote education, offering time and commitment that enables young people to make consistent progress and actively supports young people to recognise their own achievements. An external professional said, 'the staff have enabled a young person to develop socially and academically which given his starting point is significant'. Young peoples' progress in developing a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge of their background is effective. This is because all young people have life story books that provide a visual prompt that helps them understand their background and accomplishments.

Young people benefit greatly from independent living programmes that assist them with the preparation for adulthood. Staff successfully support young people to enhance their life skills by providing opportunities in the home that allow for skills to develop and grow. Cooking, cleaning, shopping are all activities in which young people participate. These are helping to aid their successful transition into young adults and preparing them for their future placement.

## **Quality of care**

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this service. The extremely competent staff team have created homely and nurturing environments that have well-defined boundaries. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying each young person's individuality. Staff ensure full attention is paid to a young person's cultural and family background. Staff say they explore sexuality and life choices with young people, however, the current care plans and other documentation do not evidence this work. Young people develop their confidence and practical abilities. They access a variety of in-house and community based activities that enhance self-awareness, develop identity and improve self-esteem in an age-appropriate manner. The staff team promotes children's positive awareness of diversity within both the home and the wider community.

Young people make excellent progress to develop their social and practical skills and by doing so, improve their self-image. By developing trusting relationships with the

staff team young people feel valued and are making informed choices about their future. Young people's care plans are reviewed regularly to ensure the care offered is consistently meeting their individual needs. The unique needs of the young people, including cultural, religious, language and racial needs are met fully. Young people's education is successfully encouraged in the broadest sense. Young people are actively supported to reach their potential because staff celebrate young peoples' educational achievements. A parent commented 'my child achieved his Duke of Edinburgh bronze award which we all celebrated. Staff are really proud of their young people and they have lots of patience. The communication is excellent and they have an open approach and welcome feedback'.

The home's location is within walking distance of a main town centre, public transport is close-by and local leisure and educational facilities are easily accessible. Staff place great importance on ensuring that young people live in a home that is appropriately located, designed and maintained to the highest standard. The staff provide a fully inclusive environment, which truly inspires young people to respect and value their own needs and the differing needs of others.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **outstanding** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Overall, the home has an excellent focus on safeguarding and protection issues. Young people using the service require high levels of support and supervision from staff whilst carrying out personal care. Staff recognise that not all young people are the same and ensure they have privacy, choice and control over the support they need and how it is delivered. The home has an anti-bullying policy and bullying is unacceptable. Any issues are discussed openly within the home ensuring young people are protected.

Young people are protected by the home's comprehensive child protection systems, policies and procedures. This provides a safe and very secure environment that young people enjoy. A parent confirmed this view saying that 'the service provides a very safe environment that makes a very positive contribution to children's well-being both physically and intellectually'. Staff receive wide-ranging child protection training which includes the protection of young people with disabilities. There are procedures for staff to follow if a young person goes missing. Procedures comply with requirements and ensure that young people are protected fully. However, no young person has ever left the home without permission.

Staff communicate clear expectations regarding boundaries which successfully helps young people to begin to understand consequences for their behaviour. Young people enjoy a safe environment, where risks are regularly assessed and actions to limit these risks are promoted. A robust safety regime protects young people. This is because all portable electric appliances are tested annually, all hazardous substances are kept securely locked away and, an annual fire risk assessment is in place. The organisation's robust recruitment systems also actively protect young people because

they ensure all staff are subject to security checks such as Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and references prior to their employment.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the children's home are **outstanding**.

Young people continue to benefit from a well-managed, stable service that is having an outstanding impact on the quality of their care and education. The one recommendation made at their last Ofsted inspection has been addressed. The home has developed the individual communication systems to ensure that all young people are able to communicate their wishes and needs.

The home has outstanding leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety and young peoples' welfare is paramount. The staff team are stable and enthusiastic and use their experiences, background and skills to develop young people's knowledge on equality and diversity. The young people have information about what they can expect which includes how they will be cared for. Parents have a clear Statement of Purpose on how the home operates. Consequently, all parties are well informed about the running of the service. Young people receive care that remains consistently high. This is because there are excellent levels of monitoring that ensure practice in physical interventions and strategies to manage behaviours remain effective. Efficient independent visits further monitor care practices and successfully help to raise standards.

Young people are looked after by staff that understand their needs. This is because staff receive a wide range of new and refresher training. Young people are looked after by staff that are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting young peoples' welfare. Staff have great confidence in the people who manage them and managers value the staff. Regular staff meetings involving all staff, ensures consistency of approach and a professional working partnership. As a result, young people receive inspiring individualised assistance. Staff provide a young person orientated environment where learning and taking part is exciting and enjoyable. A parent summed this up as they said, 'there is a creative staff group that promotes a healthy vibrant environment where young people are firmly at the centre'.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.