

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	22/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC012021
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	The Loddon Foundation Ltd
Responsible individual	Marion Cornick
Registered manager	Joy Wake
Inspector	Bridget Goddard

Inspection date	22/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
<p>This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness.</p> <p>An additional day was added to this interim inspection, to gather further evidence specifically in relation to safeguarding and behaviour management. The additional inspection day happened on 19 May 2017, and this concluded the on-site inspection.</p> <p>Staff understand young people’s needs well. They relate warmly and encouragingly to young people. As a result, relationships are generally positive, and young people make good progress in their understanding of the world and themselves. Young people are actively encouraged to play together and spend quality time with staff. Activities, including reading and games of ‘curling’, are enjoyed by young people. Staff recognise and have weekly routines to celebrate young people’s achievements’.</p> <p>Leaders and managers have dealt effectively with the two requirements made at the previous inspection, and both are now met. The first requirement was to ensure that staff were fully aware of a young person’s long-term health strategy. The manager regularly consults with healthcare specialists to ensure that the children and young people’s dietary needs are met. Staff then successfully follow the detailed plans that health professionals provide. For example, one young person no longer uses challenging behaviour to obtain food and is making excellent progress towards their target weight. The second requirement was to ensure that formal reports from all statutory reviews are requested, received and placed on the child’s file. There is now an effective system in place to ensure that this happens.</p> <p>Safeguarding practice in this home is usually very strong. There is an experienced and well-trained safeguarding team in place, which has good links with designated officers. Staff are attentive to any signs of possible abuse, and will create an individually tailored response to the particular young person, so that maximum support is offered. Recently a notifiable incident was not reported to Ofsted. However, there were some extenuating circumstances around this omission. Crucially, no harm came to the young person as a result of this oversight, and other key colleagues were appropriately notified. A recommendation will be made in relation to this incident.</p>	

The leadership team has effective monitoring systems in place. These are well supported by careful scrutiny from the independent visitor. The leadership team uses this external monitoring to improve the lives of young people. For instance it analyses spikes in behavioural incidents. This routine analysis has resulted in identifying triggers that provoke negative responses in young people. This routine analysis has resulted in the leadership team being able to minimise these triggers. For example, by changing a young person's immediate environment or by protecting a young person from loud noise. These changes have resulted in young people experiencing less stress and a consequent reduction in challenging behaviour.

This home has a clear policy, and processes and resources, to support its philosophy of finding the least restrictive means of providing the care that a young person needs. For example, a young person had previously been living in a highly restrictive hospital environment and had been strongly medicated. Over time, their medication has been reduced and finally stopped and the number of restraints they have received has significantly reduced. They are now able to say a few words, enjoy swimming, and tolerate certain other young people in their own space. One key factor in achieving this progress has been that the home, in partnership with the local authority, designed a bespoke environment for the young person. This has enabled staff to withdraw from the young person rather than there being a confrontation. This substantial progress means that the young person will now move on to a much less restrictive environment than he was in prior to coming into this home.

Routine behaviour management and incident reporting is strongly focused on restriction reduction. The home has systems and resources in place to achieve this. As well as the regular monitoring of restraints, there is an on-site behaviour support team responsible for devising young people's restriction reduction plans. The young person's team will be centrally involved, and the plan may also include specific activities such as massage, animal care or on-site swimming. This commitment to looking at the young person as a whole benefits their progress across all areas.

Information about this children's home

This school provides education and residential care for up to 30 pupils, from eight to 19 years of age, who have severe and complex learning difficulties associated with autism. The home operates as a charitable trust and, as it is also a school, it is approved by the Department for Education.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/09/2016	Full	Good
11/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/07/2015	Full	Good
19/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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 recommendation:

- Ensure that Ofsted, as well as other relevant persons, is notified if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 (4) (a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40 (4) (e)). ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 differences 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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