

Kisimul School, Acacia Hall

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC044562
Inspection date	04/01/2010
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	25/02/2009

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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

- Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
- Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
- Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
- Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service provides residential placements for up to 31 young people with learning disabilities, who also receive education provided on the same site.

The home is a large detached building standing in its own extensive grounds located in a small rural village. In addition to the residential building, there is a modern school building and an administration centre. The grounds include a horticultural area, a small livestock area, a paddock with horses, an adventure play area, hard and grassed play areas and an outdoor covered area. Young people live in a two-storey property with single and dual occupancy bedrooms, most having en-suite facilities. There are two dining areas, four separate lounges a sensory room and a soft play area.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced inspection planned to review identified key national minimum standards and to assess the progress the provider has made with a previously set required action.

The service is judged as outstanding in each outcome area. A high standard of accommodation and appropriate facilities are provided. Young people's needs are assessed thoroughly and are reflected into very detailed placement plans. Young people are closely supervised and are supported by competent and knowledgeable staff.

The service is linked to an adjacent school and young people receive a high level of support to reach their potential. Needs relating to equality and diversity are understood and are implemented throughout care arrangements.

The provision is well managed. Service development is informed by robust monitoring of care arrangements and quality assurance systems, including consultation with young people, families and placing authorities.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person has taken action to ensure that staff recruitment records now contain required information, necessary to demonstrate that young people are fully protected.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive an excellent level of support to keep healthy. Health needs are identified and reflected clearly into placement plans which provide clear guidance for care staff. Health needs are monitored and supported and prompt action is taken to ensure that needs are fully met when a health concern is identified. The service is supported by employed health professionals and also works closely with local primary health care professionals. Comments from young people include confirmation that 'someone looks after them if they are unwell.'

Young people are protected by the operation of a robust medication administration system. Medication is stored appropriately and securely. Staff training is provided in relation to the safe administration and storage of medication. A senior member of staff has delegated responsibility for oversight of medication stock and storage. Concerns arising relating to prescribed medication are referred promptly to parents and health professionals.

Young people are provided with a healthy and balanced diet. Comments from catering staff include, 'the majority of our meals are cooked from scratch using fresh ingredients.' Dietary intake is monitored and action is taken when necessary to refer concerns to a health professional. The service supports a range of dietary needs including cultural and religious needs and restrictions relating to allergies and food intolerance. Where appropriate, young people are supported to join food shopping and food preparation activities. Meal times are well organised and are provided in a pleasant and appropriate dining environment. Young people receive a high level of support at meal times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent systems are in place which safeguard young people and promote their general well-being.

Young people are provided with a safe living environment. Risk assessments are undertaken in relation to activities and the use of the environment and facilities. Individual risk assessments set out risk management strategies which are implemented in practice. Fire safety is prioritised. Staff are fully aware of the fire safety procedures and equipment is tested on a regular basis. The service is supported by a health and safety manager who monitors all areas of health and safety, undertakes risk assessments and provides staff training.

Young people are protected by safe staff recruitment procedures. All required checks are undertaken prior to staff commencing work in the home. Staff are provided with safeguarding training at an early stage of their employment and further structured safeguarding training is provided on an annual basis.

Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to inform care arrangements. The Registered Manager has links with local safeguarding teams for both children and young adults. Safeguarding issues are monitored closely by staff and managers and appropriate action is taken when a safeguarding concern is identified.

The service has complaints policies and procedures which are made known to families and placing authorities. Low level concerns will be investigated and responded to as well as more formal complaints. Comments from young people include confirmation that they feel confident that staff will respond if they are worried or scared. Comments also include, 'I would talk to staff if I am not happy about something.'

Behaviour is well managed. Staff undertake initial and refresher behaviour management training. Staff understand young people's behaviours in the context of their disabilities. Comprehensive behaviour management plans are produced to inform care arrangements. Behaviour management strategies are made known to parents and placing social workers. Challenging behaviour is supported by a high level of staff supervision and appropriate interventions which safeguard young people. There is limited use of sanctions and physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying to occur; they monitor and supervise interactions between young people to ensure that they are safeguarded.

Young people's privacy and is respected. Facilities are provided which support best practice in relation to the provision of intimate personal care. Practice is monitored closely by senior staff members and is informed by detailed policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is outstanding individual support for young people and educational achievement is promoted.

This residential facility is adjacent to the school provided on site. Young people are supported by care staff during the school day. The two services work closely together which ensures a consistent approach and support is provided to young people. Learning goals are fully supported within the care provision.

Support needs are clarified in detail within placement planning documents. Young people are allocated individual key workers who monitor support needs and the implementation of placement plans. Young people receive a high level of support from competent and committed staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Referrals are thoroughly assessed prior to a placement being agreed. Staff visit previous residential settings and meet with parents, previous carers and education staff. Families are encouraged to visit the home prior to young people's admission. Families and young people are provided with a good level of information about the service they can expect to receive. Contact between young people and their family receives excellent support. Families visiting the service have the use of a dedicated room. Agreed contact arrangements are reflected into placement plans. Families are kept updated and are consulted on all levels about young people's care.

Young people's care is informed by a thorough assessment of need which informs comprehensive and very detailed placement planning documents. Plans incorporate all areas of individual need and provide detailed guidance clarifying how needs will be met. Plans capture needs relating to issues of equality and diversity, including the support provided for young people with a disability to access community resources and activities, personal care, needs relating to religion, ethnicity and culture. Plans are reviewed regularly and are updated promptly as needs change. Young people are supported to participate in review meetings and to contribute their views to care planning.

The degree of inclusion of young people within this setting is outstanding. Young people receive a high level of support to make their views known. Staff undertake training which supports young people who are non verbal to communicate. Symbols communication systems are readily available in all areas of the home and are used to consult with young people. Daily schedules may be used to support individual needs. Young people are encouraged and supported to make daily choices about personal care arrangements, activities and outings.

There is a commitment to service development informed by feedback from young people, families and placing authorities. Regular surveys are undertaken and responses are evaluated and assessed. Surveys demonstrate that parents have a high regard for the quality of service provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with excellent facilities and accommodation. The premises are well maintained with appropriate good hygiene systems in place. The home is decorated and furnished to a high standard. The majority of bedrooms are individual and have en-suite facilities. Shared bedrooms are only used when agreed as appropriate to meet individual needs. Bedrooms may be personalised and young people are supported to make personal choices in relation to bedroom decor and furnishing. Bedding is replaced on a six-monthly cycle.

The home provides young people with a range of shared and individual accommodation appropriate to their needs and which reflects the facilities set out within the home's Statement of Purpose. The service has four separate lounge areas to support linked groups of young people; these areas provide a homely environment. There is a range of meeting rooms and offices and also a family room to support contact arrangements. Young people have the use of a sensory room and a soft room, which provide areas for individual time and stimulation. Appropriate showers, baths and toilets are provided.

Young people are supported to reach their potential and to develop an appropriate level of self-care and independence. The home works closely with the on-site school, implementing a work programme which assesses young people's abilities and supports them to progress, including communication, independence, hobbies and interests and 'getting ready to go out'.

Young people are encouraged, where appropriate, to help with food shopping and limited food preparation; they may assist with laundry tasks and are encouraged, in line with placement plans, to develop and improve their self-care skills.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The service provided is reflected accurately into a required Statement of Purpose document. Families are provided with a detailed pack of information about the service when their child is admitted to the home. A young people's guide has been produced using symbols to aid understanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. A culture of inclusion and respect for young people is provided. Care arrangements prioritise young people and promote achievement, consultation and choice. Individual needs are supported including those relating to a disability, religion, ethnicity, gender and culture.

The service is well managed. There is an experienced management team lead by a Registered Manager. The quality of care is supported by robust management monitoring and action is taken promptly to improve arrangements when necessary. A range of quality assurance systems are operated. External management monitoring visits are made to the home to review the quality of care. Surveys are undertaken with young people, families and placing authorities. Feedback is used to inform service development.

Young people's records are maintained in good order and are stored securely.

Young people's care is supported by appropriate numbers of knowledgeable and caring staff. Many of the young people are supported on a one-to-one basis by consistent members of staff. Staff are provided with support and training. New staff are supported by a mentor and follow a six-week induction plan. Further induction knowledge and assessment is provided. Staff then move on to undertake a National

Vocational Qualification at level 3 in working with children and young people. The organisation has two dedicated training managers who facilitate a rolling programme of training to meet group and individual needs.