

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	21/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC020193
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered provider	The SENAD Group Limited
Registered provider address	1 St Georges House, Vernon Gate, Derby DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual	Mark Flynn
Registered manager	David Hancox
Inspector	Joanne Vyas

Inspection date	21/03/2017
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>Staff provide child-focused care. All children and young people have a bespoke package of care that enables most of them to make good progress in all aspects of their life. For example, staff help children and young people to become desensitised to ordinary everyday experiences such as having their nails cut or wearing a hair slide. This takes time, skill and patience, but the reward is clear to see for staff, children and young people. A social worker said: 'The staff are very child focused and have a very good understanding of his needs.'</p> <p>Staff promote positive behaviour by building consistent, strong and nurturing relationships with children and young people. A social worker said: 'He had significant behavioural issues which they have managed remarkably well.' They praise achievement no matter how small. Staff have a good understanding of each child and young person. This enables them to communicate effectively with them. Staff use signs and symbols but also have a good understanding of body language, sounds and gestures. This helps to prevent frustration when children and young people are communicating their wishes and feelings with staff.</p> <p>Staff are well trained in physical intervention, which includes using de-escalation techniques such as redirection, where staff try to distract the child or young person with another activity. Physical intervention is used as a last resort, but the incidence of physical intervention is high due to the high level of challenge exhibited by children and young people. Through careful tracking of physical interventions, the registered manager can demonstrate that there has been a reduction in the number of physical interventions used in the home over time. Children and young people are asked for their views about any restraints that they have been involved in. Staff work closely with the physical intervention training provider to provide tailored behaviour support packages. They also meet regularly in a multi-agency forum to review planning. The registered manager closely monitors all physical interventions, looking for patterns and trends. Therefore, careful targeted interventions are reducing the number of physical interventions required for most children and young people.</p> <p>Children and young people who have previously severely harmed themselves have made excellent progress and no longer exhibit this extreme behaviour. Children and young people do not go missing from the home. They are highly supervised</p>	

but also feel happy, secure and safe in the home.

Some children and young people have external advocacy support. Staff are also working closely with an advocacy service to help further promote the voice of the child. Additionally, the registered manager is also a strong advocate for children and young people, helping to ensure that they get the services they require.

The environment is specifically designed to meet the needs and wishes of the children and young people. For example, a young person likes to bathe in an extra-large bath. This was bought especially for him. Some bedrooms are full of family photos, pictures and toys while others are sparse according to the child's wishes and ability to tolerate furnishings. Communal areas are homely and comfortable. A young person said that he likes his room but particularly likes it to be cool. An air-conditioning unit is fitted to ensure that the room is cool enough for him. Some areas are in need of refurbishment and this is planned over the next few months. Doors throughout the home and school are heavy as most are fire doors but they shut very quickly. This could result in injuring children, young people and staff.

Staff work in partnership with parents as well as ensuring that parents are well supported and reassured. A social worker said about a young person's mum: 'She's met the staff who are very accommodating and flexible with her. Mum is reassured and feels that her son is well placed at the home.'

Children and young people enjoy a range of activities. A parent said: 'He does enjoy it here. He gets to do a lot.' During the inspection, children and young people were busy raising money for charity by washing cars, selling the charity's merchandise and gunging the headteacher! They were also busy making mother's day cards, playing in the grounds, relaxing in their rooms or swimming. They have access to weekly on-site clubs, such as drumming, yoga, health and well-being and art.

The registered manager is looking at making links again with the local community after a number of youth clubs closed down. All children and young people enjoyed a well-planned and risk-assessed holiday last year.

The home has gone through a turbulent period due to a number of experienced and new staff leaving. Staff morale has been low and some staff still feel unsupported in their role. However, the leadership team has implemented a recent management restructure and mentoring scheme after listening to feedback and ideas from staff. House managers have been reinstated and this appears to be working well. A member of staff said: 'We feel more empowered as management are listening now. House managers will go the extra mile for us.' Furthermore, all new staff are assigned a mentor, who is an experienced member of staff. This has not only helped to retain new members of staff but has also shown staff that they are valued.

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care for up to 25 children and young people who have complex communication, learning difficulties and severe challenging behaviours. Most children and young people are on the autistic spectrum. It is part of a residential special school and is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
01/08/2016	Full	Good
14/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/06/2015	Full	Good
20/01/2015	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:

- Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety legislations. This is with specific reference to doors that close quickly and may injure a young person or member of staff. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

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 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 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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