

SC358046

Registered provider: The Senad Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This privately run service is registered as a children's home. The home is part of a residential school. It provides care and accommodation for up to 38 children with autistic spectrum disorder, Asperger syndrome, acquired brain injury and communication difficulties. The home currently does not admit any more than 25 children.

Inspection dates: 14 to 15 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 14 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is outstanding because:

- Children are happy and benefit from the varied experiences and opportunities that they have at this school. They make exceptional progress in their education and emotional well-being. They become much better at managing their own behaviour.
- The views and wishes of the children are important to staff. Children feel listened to, as every opportunity is taken to seek their views and their ideas are implemented.
- The leadership and management team is highly effective. The registered manager is very well qualified and experienced. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision.
- Strong, collaborative working between the care, education and therapy teams leads to enhanced life chances for children.
- Research-informed practice enhances the experience of children.
- There is a reflective, multi-agency response to safeguarding incidents and welfare concerns. This ensures that low-level concerns do not develop into bigger child protection issues.
- Highly effective partnership working with parents and other professionals results in sustained improvement in the lives of children.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The environment is not consistently homely across all four homes.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
06/06/2016	Full	Outstanding
21/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
01/06/2015	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. The environment should be maintained and furnished to a good standard and the use of two-way radios should be limited around children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are happy. They enjoy their experiences at this school. The school provides children with opportunities that they may not otherwise have. A parent said: 'Staff take him out to different places and expose him to new activities that have made me say, "Wow"!'

Staff have positive and nurturing relationships with children. They know and understand the children extremely well. They have access to in-depth information about them. A child said: 'The staff are good and helpful, and spend lots of time with me.'

The emotional and physical health needs of the children are fully addressed. A therapy team works closely with parents, children and care staff. Health promotion work is innovative and research based. It is particularly strong in relation to sleep management and sexual health. Staff are also developing boys' and girls' groups to help the children to have a better understanding of how their bodies change during puberty.

Medication is safely stored and administered. Staff are well trained in how to manage medicines safely. When mistakes are made, staff reflect and implement better systems to prevent a recurrence. Medication is regularly reviewed to ensure that children are receiving the correct medication.

Children make significant progress with their attendance and academic achievement. A parent said: 'My son was out of school for two years and he is now making really good progress in terms of catching up.' Children who have not been in education for a number of years now have a high attendance record. A high proportion of children take GCSE examinations and, last year, 68% of these children received a grade C or above.

Children's views are highly sought after. Staff listen to them and, where possible, action their requests. A parent said: 'My son is on the school council and I feel he has a say in the running of the house and that his voice is heard. Clear explanations are provided if staff are unable to action a request. Each child's footprint is clear on their care plans. This motivates them to achieve the targets they have been involved in setting.'

Children's religious needs are well considered. For example, a child who recently became a Buddhist has been supported to access an appropriate religious establishment. This child has also been supported to participate in yoga every week to assist with relaxation. This is helping to alleviate his anxiety.

Children have access to a wealth of activities at the home and in the community. Children spoke about enjoying trips out, such as bowling, the cinema, the gym, cadets, horse riding and climbing. Children are encouraged to pursue their interests and hobbies. For example, one child is supported to attend his gymnastics club at least twice a week and to compete nationally.

The environment is split into four separate houses. Some are more homely and better maintained than others. There is a programme of refurbishment, but this has been delayed. Children have individual bedrooms, some with en suite facilities. The bedrooms are highly personalised. All staff carry a two-way radio even while working with children. At times, these are intrusive and irksome.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

There is a robust, reflective, multi-agency response to safeguarding incidents and welfare concerns. Children rarely go missing from this school. When a child goes missing, clear, well thought-out strategies are put in place to prevent the child going missing again. For example, a child went missing for a very short period of time because they wanted some space and time alone. Staff have placed a sign by the door that they can use to alert staff to where they have gone when they feel that they want to be alone. Staff also have a 'grab bag' filled with useful items such as a torch, mobile phone and foil blanket in case the child should go missing again. Proactive responses ensure that smaller welfare concerns do not escalate into bigger child protection issues.

Children feel safe. A child said: 'It is a safe place and we have lots of fun.' Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding procedures and implement them effectively.

From an early age, children are educated about online safety through a range of tools and teaching methods. This means that they learn to use the internet and social media safely.

Comprehensive behaviour support plans provide staff with the guidance that they need to help children when they are feeling anxious or agitated. Positive, nurturing relationships, combined with consistent strategies, help to stabilise children's behaviours.

Staff use positive, proactive behaviour strategies, meaning that physical intervention is rarely required. Highly effective de-escalation techniques are used, such as 'fiddle' toys and weighted blankets. These further reduce the need for physical intervention. When physical intervention is necessary, it is used sensitively and proportionately.

Children have a positive regard for one another. Bullying is not tolerated. Children are well informed about bullying through posters, the children's guide and personal, social,

health and economic (PSHE) lessons. A bullying survey highlighted that there are very few problems with bullying. Small incidents such as name calling do not escalate, because staff intervene quickly.

Pre-recruitment vetting procedures are strong and help to ensure that unsuitable adults do not work with children. All appropriate checks are undertaken prior to new staff commencing their posts.

The staff are not risk averse, but they are very aware of children's vulnerabilities and any potential hazards at the school and in the local area. They take well thought-out, managed risks. This means children can access the local woods, for example, and have fun.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership and management is extremely effective. The registered manager is highly qualified and experienced. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and is continually looking to improve the quality of the provision.

Research is embedded into practice, enhancing the development of staff skills and the experience of children. For example, staff implement calming routines at night time, such as reading stories, to help children to have a good night's sleep.

Staff are very knowledgeable about the children whom they care for. A parent said: 'Staff are genuine and credible'. Staff care very much for the children and are enthusiastic about providing a high-quality service. Care plans are detailed, accessible and regularly updated. Care staff work in partnership with education and therapy teams to ensure a holistic approach to care and education. This means that children make exceptional progress in their education. Children's emotional well-being and behaviour are also much better.

Staff feel very well supported. They feel valued by the management team. Morale is high. Staff have access to a comprehensive, high-quality training programme. New staff follow a strong induction programme then go on to undertake a level 3 diploma for residential childcare. A number of staff have left recently for personal reasons. This means that fewer than half of the care staff are fully qualified. However, there is no impact on children, because of the high-quality training and support that new staff receive.

Staff work closely with parents. Communication with parents is a strength. Parents feel that staff listen to them. Therapy staff visit parents, and parents are invited into the school for training. This enables a consistent approach for children. A parent said: 'The staff deserve a medal. The placement has had a 100% positive impact on the whole family'.

Children know how to make a complaint. They say that they can talk to staff if they are

unhappy. Complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively. A parent said: 'When we had a concern, staff listened and resolved it very quickly. I have every confidence in the staff.' Additionally, an independent advocate has recently started visiting the home. Children know who he is and have used his services.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC358046

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: The Senad Group Limited

Registered provider address: 1 St George's House, Vernongate, Derby DE1 1UQ

Responsible individual: Mark Flynn

Registered manager: Karen Tatham

Inspector(s)

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

Rachel Griffiths, social care inspector

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