



Inspection Report on

Aran Hall School Ltd

Dolgellau

Date Inspection Completed

11 May 2023.

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About Aran Hall School Ltd

Type of care provided	Care Home Service Childrens Home
Registered Provider	Aran Hall School Ltd
Registered places	18
Language of the service	English and Welsh.
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	21/09/2021
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	The service can provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Summary

Aran Hall (operated by SENAD Group) is registered to provide care for 18 children between 11 and 21 years of age. Aran Hall provides care and education to children with intellectual and developmental learning needs and associated challenging behaviours. Mark Ryder is the Responsible Individual; the service has a manager who is qualified and registered with Social Care Wales.

Care staff support children to achieve their well-being outcomes. There are several platforms to enable children to share their wishes and feelings. Children receive care and support to enhance their learning, emotional and behavioural needs. Personal plans support care staff to perform their duties and risk assessments give clear instructions on what steps to take. The service supports both males and females, however, currently all children are male.

Well-being

Children's wishes and feelings are respected. Care staff listen to children's views and take action to make changes to improve children's lives. An independent advocate on behalf of Tros Gynnal Plant advocacy service, visits Aran Hall regularly to ensure children are listened to, understand their rights, support them to take part in meetings and reviews with their Social Workers or to raise complaints. Community meetings take place in each of the children's accommodation and are attended by children, care, and education staff of individual children. Social Workers visit the service and are in regular contact with children and care staff over the telephone. Key worker sessions and de-briefs following challenging incidents are provided to children to learn how to better manage their behaviour.

Children enjoy their time at Aran Hall, making strong friendships and enjoying the activities and opportunities available to them. Children told us that they really enjoy taking part in a broad activity programme, which they choose with their friends, and they appreciate time away from Aran Hall visiting local towns and villages. They enjoy the company of care staff, who support them to learn new skills, such as preparing their own food, and setting themselves good routines for healthy sleep and personal care.

Children experience individualised care and support. Care staff know children well and recognise and value their unique starting points. Children have positive relationships with care staff that underpin their development and care staff help children to realise their full potential, manage their emotions and past experiences.

The understanding and identification of safeguarding concerns is a strength. Care staff receive regular, clear information to ensure they understand safeguarding policies and procedures. The manager has developed a positive safeguarding culture, encouraging care staff to share any concerns they have, and this results in swift action being taken if there are concerns about children's safety or care staff practice. Care staff understand children and their individual needs, as well as the impact of cumulative concerns. Consequently, safeguarding referrals are submitted to the local safeguarding authority when needed.

Care and Support

There are experienced and suitably qualified care staff that are ambitious and have high expectations for what children can achieve. They promote high standards of care that help to develop improved outcomes for children. A stable, experienced, and suitably qualified care staff team offers warm and nurturing care that supports children's development. CIW noted a few examples of professional practice that has resulted in sustained improvement to children's lives, including some leading to child protection activity with the safeguarding authority. This is possible because of a strong commitment to safeguarding practice, training, an effective and holistic communication system, and a commitment to protecting children.

Care staff guide and support children to begin to understand and manage their feelings, and to recognise the impact their behaviour, language and attitude can have on themselves and others. Care staff promote a tolerant and accepting community, where diversity is celebrated, and safety and security are promoted. A social worker told the Inspector that children feel safe in the school, and often prefer to be there than elsewhere because they see it as a refuge when they remember difficult and traumatic events in their lives.

Children have community meetings once a week that are attended by children, care, education, and management staff. Items for the agenda include, menu and activity planning, decoration of the care home, item purchases and education. Community meetings are a useful platform to empower children to have an active voice in their care as well as learning key social skills in a structured environment.

Admissions to the home are planned. A suitably qualified and experienced member of staff conducts an initial assessment to ensure the service can meet children's needs in line with the assessment and recording framework. Key workers act as role models and advocate for children. They attend reviews and key meetings as support for children to have their voice heard. Key workers have an integral role in the care and support of children to ensure their needs continue to be met.

Environment

Aran Hall is situated near Dolgellau, North Wales and located within the Snowdonia National Park. Aran Hall is located on a three and a half acres site. The towns of Dolgellau and Bala, both major tourist centres, are within a short drive of Aran Hall. Full use is made of local resources, including libraries and a further education college to encourage inclusion in the community and provide valuable learning and working experiences.

The management and oversight of health and safety is good. When appropriate, tradespeople are employed to respond to actions needed. Regular fire drills and checks of firefighting equipment take place, which support to protect children and care staff.

Education and classroom activity takes place in a range of separate school buildings. There are hard and grassed playing surfaces as well as a mountain bike track. Children have suitable accommodation that supports them to achieve positive well-being outcomes. Children's accommodations are clean, tidy and bedrooms are suitably furnished according to their needs, risk, and behaviours.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of the service is effective. The provider has quality assurance systems in place to monitor the operation of the home and maintain high standards. The Responsible Individual visits the home in person and reports on their findings within the regulation timescale. They speak with the children, care staff and the manager. The service provider arranges for an independent person to visit the home every month to complete an audit of the service and produce a report of their findings. This provides an external overview of the service's operation to identify further developments. Furthermore, the manager provides a report based on their findings, which supports the three-tier quality assurance system to be effective.

Care staff have access to a wide range of introductory and awareness training courses which provide an insight into recognising and managing children's presenting needs. Care staff receive regular one to one supervision and an annual appraisal of their performance and development. Team meetings take place regularly and allow discussion about children's individual needs and concerns and how best to respond to them.

The provider has effective procedures to support care staff. They provide suitable training and guidance to equip care staff to provide the right care for the children. Supervisions include discussions about the children, practice, training needs and care staff's personal well-being. The manager makes use of team meetings to review processes such as recording systems so care staff can discuss any issues and identify improvements. Care staff told us the quality of the training is good, and the individual supervision meetings and team meetings are valuable for discussing the children's progress and how best to support them. To provide direct care to each house, the service currently employs forty-one care staff a majority of which are Level 3 qualified and registered with Social Care Wales.

The manager promotes an integrated approach to understanding safeguarding. Care staff are trained to realise each child as unique, but also part of Aran Hall and the wider community. Care staff recognise the importance of family and local community influence, the impact of past trauma or unidentified need, and children's experiences and emotions. They work tirelessly to identify risk, predict unsafe outcomes, and interpret children's behaviour to better understand their emotional well-being. The manager, together with care staff have created a culture of transparency and reflection, where professional practice can be challenged, and care staff feel empowered to identify and address areas for personal development.

Summary of Non-Compliance	
Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people's well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)		
Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement		
Regulation	Summary	Status

N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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