

# SC038276

Registered provider: Underley Schools Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to care for up to 48 children and young people, irrespective of gender, who have emotional, behavioural and/or learning disabilities. The manager was registered with Ofsted in March 2017 and is close to finishing his level 5 qualification.

**Inspection dates:** 16 to 17 September 2019

**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:** 20 June 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Recent inspection history

<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Inspection judgement</b>
20/06/2018	Full	Outstanding
28/11/2017	Full	Good
11/10/2017	Full	Inadequate
21/03/2017	Full	Outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

This home accommodates a large group of young people with highly complex physical, learning and health needs. The quality of individualised care provided is exceptionally high. Staff care for young people in a way that celebrates their abilities, helps them to get the most enjoyment from living at the home and enables them to reach their individual potential. Staff routinely go above and beyond to ensure that young people are happy, healthy and continue to learn.

Young people consistently told inspectors that they are well cared for. They can identify things about living in the home that they like and enjoy. Great care is taken to ascertain young people's views, wishes and feelings, including for those children who are non-verbal. Staff are highly skilled in understanding young people's methods of communication and can interpret their non-verbal cues. They know the young people extremely well and provide care that is entirely in line with their needs. Staff go to extreme lengths to show respect and protect young people's dignity. Staff are patient, kind, affectionate and enthusiastic, which results in positive relationships between the young people and staff.

The home offers young people a holistic approach to care, health and well-being. A multi-disciplinary team includes teachers, care workers, learning disability nurses, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and a psychiatrist, working closely together to ensure that care packages meet every aspect of young people's needs. This joint target-setting approach facilitates progression, and many young people make much better progress than anticipated.

Young people take part in a wide range of leisure activities which are supported and promoted by staff. This helps them to acquire skills and develop as individuals. A focus recently has been on promoting independent travel through accessing public transport. This has not only proved popular but has also increased young people's skills for when they move on from the home.

Young people on 52-week placements had the opportunity to go on holiday in the summer. One family was able to join their daughter on holiday, where she continued to be supported by staff. This facilitated a family holiday, which had not been possible for the family for many years.

Parents and social workers are helped to be part of young people's everyday lives using software that is a closed online application to which staff and young people upload photographs and information about the young person's day. Parents and social workers can make comments and reply, providing them with a high level of involvement in the young people's everyday lives.

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

Young people reported that they feel safe. Parents and social workers confirmed that young people are safe because of the actions of staff in the home. Staff understand and record young people's risks. Staff are knowledgeable about each young person's individual vulnerabilities and safeguarding needs.

Young people benefit from consistent routines and boundaries which are communicated to them in a way that is commensurate with their understanding. This helps them to know what to expect from each day and to understand expectations of them in regard to their behaviour.

Leaders and managers go to great lengths to ensure that staff understand and implement their roles in respect of keeping young people safe. Staff take part in activities designed to check and reinforce their understanding of each young person's risks. Managers have been creative in devising ways to keep staff interested and motivated to participate in such activities. This results in a staff team that is both proactive in preventing harm and responsive to incidents where harm may occur.

Due to the nature of the young people's conditions, they sometimes need to be held in restrictive interventions to keep them safe. Each incident is recorded in detail and evaluated. Additionally, there is an overall evaluation by management to identify any emerging patterns and trends. Staff are trained in Team Teach, workshops are regularly held to ensure that their knowledge is refreshed and that they understand how to react to specific behaviours, for example biting.

Managers have commissioned an external agency to provide up-to-date training in safeguarding for staff. This is to include any new safeguarding issues arising and changes to the legislative framework under which the home operates.

Safeguarding incidents that occur are communicated quickly to parents and social workers to ensure that they are kept fully informed and included in decision making.

There has been only one missing-from-care incident since the last inspection. On this occasion, the young person did not actually leave the site but hid from staff. The response of staff was robust, and the young person did not come to any harm.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Managers work tirelessly to continue to build staff morale and promote positive team working. This has had a positive impact on staff retention, and staff and managers reported high levels of commitment and job satisfaction. The home is almost at staffing capacity, which is an improvement from previous inspections. Managers have continued to promote 'employee of the month' to celebrate outstanding work and have also provided gym membership for staff to support their physical and emotional well-being.

Managers are motivated to continuously improve the service. A team of four deputy managers is proactive in supporting the registered manager by coming up with ideas for developing the service. Managers make good use of internal and external monitoring and have now commissioned an independent visitor to spend two days on-site each month to ensure that monitoring arrangements are thorough. Reports from the independent visitor show good engagement with young people, who spoke highly of their care.

The home environment is continuously being developed. Recent additions are artificial grass to the external play areas, which provides young people with a safe and clean outside space. Further developments are either partially complete (for example, the safe woodland walkway to the junior school) or soon to be started (for example, a soft play area and an outdoor playground).

Records are of an excellent standard and are well organised. Information about young people is recorded in a child-friendly way, and records evidence the young people's voices throughout. All plans and assessments are up to date, and staff sign to say they have read and are familiar with them.

New staff have a full, well-planned induction which includes a wide range of mandatory training. Additional training is sourced which is to enable staff to meet individual young people's needs. For example, staff at one bungalow are trained in pathological demand avoidance syndrome, to develop their knowledge around an individual young person's behaviour.

Deputy managers have introduced observation sessions, where they observe staff teams in each bungalow to ensure that they are aware of how the staff team is working and how the staff respond to young people's needs. This helps them identify strengths and areas for development for the staff.

The home maintains excellent communication with all stakeholders. The current registered manager is working closely alongside the designated officer and the regulator, as well as a range of other external agencies, to ensure that practice is transparent and of a high quality.

## **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 differences 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:** SC038276

**Provision sub-type:** Residential special school

**Registered provider:** Underley Schools Limited

**Registered provider address:** 1 Merchants Place, River Street, Bolton BL2 1BX

**Responsible individual:** Ann Henderson

**Registered manager:** Christopher Kirkbride

## Inspectors

Charlie Bamber, social care inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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