

Care service inspection report

Full inspection

Millholm School Care Accommodation Service

Millholm
Sevenacres
Kilwinning



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd

Service provider number: SP2006008009

Care service number: CS2009233253

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

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Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	6	Excellent
Quality of environment	5	Very Good
Quality of staffing	5	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership		N/A

What the service does well

Millholm is has an exceptional team comprising of highly motivated and caring staff and a management team who are committed and dedicated to meeting the needs of the young people in their care.

The ethos of respect, nurture and positive regard has benefitted the children and young people, all of whom are making great progress.

We have found outstanding outcomes in relation to the health, well-being and progress of children and young people towards reaching their potential.

What the service could do better

The service is progressing refresher training for staff.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service has succeeded in creating stability for young people many of whom have suffered multiple placement breakdowns and complex histories.

The environment has improved both inside the house and in the grounds.

The staff team are progressing in SVQ training and the team have created a cohesiveness which has underpinned the provision of a high standard of care.

Conclusion

The children and young people living in Millholm are achieving excellent outcomes supported by a staff team who are performing a very good standard.

1 About the service we inspected

Millholm is registered for School Care Accommodation. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 5 young people aged between 10 and 17 years of age. The service is provided by Spark of Genius (Training) Ltd. (Spark of Genius) and operates a 24 hour service 52 weeks of the year.

Millholm is a detached property in an attractive rural setting outside Kilwinning in North Ayrshire.

Millholm provides the residential living accommodation for the young people while their educational needs are met through attendance at learning centres also provided by Spark of Genius, or at other educational provision, whichever is identified in care plans.

At the time of the inspection there was five young people living in residence.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of care and support - Grade 6 - Excellent

Quality of environment - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of staffing - Grade 5 - Very Good

Quality of management and leadership - N/A

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website www.careinspectorate.com or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

2 How we inspected this service

The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What we did during the inspection

This unannounced inspection was carried out over four days between the 23 to 30 June 2016. We visited between 12 noon and 7pm on the first day, 7am- 1pm, 11- 6pm and 9.30- 2.30 pm on subsequent days over a two week period.

During the course of the inspection we spoke with the following people:

- Five young people
- The manager
- Two assistant managers
- SOG head of children services
- SOG head teacher
- Independent advocacy representative
- Three placing social workers
- Relative of a young person.

We examined relevant records some of which included:

- Support plans for four young people
- Staff meeting minutes
- Staff supervision and appraisals
- Staff training records
- Incident reports
- Accident reports
- Medication records
- The Millholm memories folder
- The service development plan.

We considered the information provided to the Care Inspectorate by the service in the self-assessment and annual return. We also viewed the environment. We took all of this into account and provided feedback of the inspection findings on the 30 June 2016.

Grading the service against quality themes and statements

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

Fire safety issues

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at www.firescotland.gov.uk

The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

Annual Return Received: Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The manager completed a detailed and relevant self assessment which identified strengths and areas for improvement. This took account of the quality assurance systems in which the views of children and young people and other stakeholders are sought.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

We spoke with all five children. The children were very positive about living in Millholm. They stated they liked and trusted the staff. We were told that life had improved since living in Millholm. We were also told that staff helped them keep in touch with people who were important to them. Children and young people confirmed their involvement in the day to day operations of the house, such as food choices, activity planning and decoration. We were told that staff paid them enough attention and that they could approach staff if they felt anxious, sad or worried and expressed confidence that they would be supported. Young people told us they felt safe and cared for.

Taking carers' views into account

We spoke with the relative of one young person who expressed extreme gratitude to the staff at Millholm and the Spark of Genius as a whole for the commitment shown to his relative. He stated that this gave great reassurance and he was of the opinion his relative was receiving the help care and attention he deserved. He stated his young relative felt wanted and cared about and this meant a great deal. The care provided was described as "faultless" and "excellent"

3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

Statement 2

“We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.”

Service strengths

We found that the service performance for this statement was excellent.

Children and young people in Millholm were being fully supported to achieve their potential by a staff team who know and understood the children exceptionally well and were responsive to their needs.

There was an excellent standard of information relating to the needs and preferences of young people within personal plans. Young people were fully engaged in support planning and used child friendly tools, such as 'My sparkle life' and 'All about me' bringing the individual character and personality of young person to life on paper and resulting in outstanding child centred support. Examples included, 'What makes me happy', seeing my relatives, going skateboarding and keeping busy and 'What upsets me', Adults using too much eye contact', 'not being given private time'. We found the support children received and daily routines mirrored the needs and preferences contained within care plan documentation. This meant young people had been giving the opportunity to explore their feelings, record their views and that these were respected.

The staff team promoted a nurturing environment through positive experiences, affectionate, warm, engaging relationship with young people and a ethos of respect. The philosophy of Millholm is to be an alternative family and this worked exceptionally well with young people; staff understood and respected each young person's specific differences. This included young people being aware of each other's 'trigger points' and what they each needed to restore calm after crisis. We observed how young people 'planned ignoring' as this worked for one young person and another young person was given time and space to calm down. We observed that young people liked each other and enjoyed shared time together and were pleased for each another's achievements and good experiences.

Young people worked with key workers to agree specific short and long term goals. The highly successful use of incentives positively reinforced achievements made and we could see steady incremental progress made for all children, some of which included managing peer relationships better, and adhering to improved night time routines. One young person's social worker expressed the view that the young person " had completed transformed from being a child with significant challenging behaviour to a happy and secure child who responds to boundaries and structure" For another young person the positive changes to behaviour had resulted in significant change to the care plan from a proposed placement move to remaining at Millholm. This young person's social worker told us, " The commitment to xxx has been outstanding, this has been a wonderful care experience, he is happy and settled and much more able to express himself in an appropriate way."

Individual time was scheduled in advance in a weekly planner displayed all children had the opportunity to have one to one time. This was in direct response to one young person requiring one to one levels of supervision and a perception of other young people that they were being overlooked. This was very successful and another indicator of the responsiveness of staff and management to the views of young people.

We found some outstanding achievements being realised, such as, for one young person the dream of being an actress was being realised by being member of a community drama group and performing in a stage version of 'Bugsy Malone'. Another young person as fulfilling a long held ambition to work with animals by undertaking a SVQ award in horse care management, keeping gold fish and being responsible for the school rabbits over the summer break. The placing social worker told us " The opportunities provided in Millholm have been great and she is doing so well."

The educational outcomes for children had improved greatly with some children in full time education for the first time in many years. Children were enjoying learning and catching up with peers. One young person had made such marked improvement that it was considered she was now able to reintegrate with mainstream education and was on track to achieve National 5s and potentially Higher National Certificates. Another primary school child had attained the reading level far in advance for her years. Therefore we could see that the earlier disadvantage of these children was being overcome. Education and learning was promoted in the house with toys and equipment to support learning in a fun way. This linked to the individual learning support plans which suggested children's preferred way of learning. One example of this was one child learned best using visual aids and prompts and therefore her target to get organised for school was integrated into her daily planner using pictorial aids to prompt breakfast, bath time, play time and homework.

The liaison between the school and care staff was highly effective in supporting the children and supporting attainment. The school head teacher told us " The support from the staff is excellent in keeping us in touch with issues which may impact on learning. We have seen children mature and become much more able to regulate their behaviour and this has been fundamental to their ability to focus and learn." For one young person not able to cope within the school setting a bespoke education support programme was in place with teaching staff from Spark of Genius Caledonia school coming to Millholm to carry out individual learning sessions and care staff supporting a tailored home teaching programme. This innovative approach has brought significant gains to the young persons confidence, attitude to education and a willingness to consider a return to school.

Hobbies and interests were promoted. This included outdoor activities such as, fishing, cycling and going on nature walks. Trips to the cinema and leisure centres were routinely organised and arts and crafts and board games were part of day to day interactions with children and young people within the house. The young people had benefitted from a camping holiday which was positively received and enjoyed by all. One child's social worker told us, "she has had so many 'firsts' since living in Millholm, swimming, camping, attending a club with other children her age. This has been brilliant for her confidence, self-esteem and social development."

Areas for improvement

The service had introduced the Scottish Government GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) well-being indicators to overlap existing support plan documentation. Management and staff had identified the need to improve upon so that they fully reflect on the high quality support work being carried out with individual young people and were working with the organisation's quality assurance manager to address this .

Grade

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 3

“We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met.”

Service strengths

We found that the service performance for this statement was excellent.

Staff were extremely conscientious in ensuring the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people were met. Accessing LAAC health services had presented a challenge for the staff as many children came from outwith the host Local Authority but with continued perseverance this had been achieved. As a result all children and young people had undergone a medical health check by a LAAC nurse (Look after and accommodated child) and any recommendations made had been followed up, for example, outstanding immunisations, attending opticians and dietary changes.

We found all children were registered with primary health care services such as GP practices, dentist and opticians. We found that medical advice was sought as required and a pro-active stance was taken, for example routine dental health checks and annual eye examinations.

Some children and young people had a reluctance to attend to health matters either through anxiety or failure to appreciate the importance. We found staff had excelled in supporting young people to overcome fears and for one young person this had meant good dental health after a long period of neglect and substantial tooth decay.

Health matters were promoted through healthy eating, home prepared meals cooked from fresh ingredients. Young people were supported to understand the value of nutrition and make good food choices without feeling deprived. Each young person had a treat box which was filled with their preferred snacks on a weekly basis. We found that overall young people made good varied choices and not just 'sweeties' which would perhaps be expected. The outcomes for young people were extremely good with one young person losing a significant amount of weight and was far fitter and happier. Another young person who was underweight was now within the normal weight range for her age and height.

The most outstanding outcomes for health had been in the management of a chronic long term health condition for one young person and in meeting the mental health needs for a further two young people. The successful management of the young person's chronic health condition had brought about such improvements that her regime of daily medication was being reduced due to improved overall health and a marked reduction in long standing symptoms. In working closely with the specialist clinical lead nurse, in learning about the condition and adapting the care for this young person the staff team has significantly contributed to immediate and longer health improvements/ outcomes for this young person into adulthood.

Working closely with the Spark of Genius Psychotherapist meant that the progress of another young person meant she no longer required to take medication for anxiety and was presenting as fun loving and outgoing with no recent self harming incidents. A further young person was meeting with CAMHs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health services) after many years of refusing to engage with this service. As a result an underlying mental health problem has been diagnosed and treatment is bringing about such positive changes to mood and behaviour that he is now able to engage with education, manage free time, sustaining his placement and is rebuilding family relationships.

A significant outcome for young people was that the two older children in the house who smoked cigarettes have stopped. This was achieved through use of incentives, education and support from the smoking cessation service and support from staff who encouraged and praised their endeavours and understood mood swings would feature as part of the withdrawal period.

Staff members committed to this fully and did not collude with young people when they stated they were going out for a break when it was suspected it was for a cigarette. This was an approach used both within Millholm and within the Caledonia school grounds. One of these young people told us, " I'm pleased I have stopped, I have one sometimes when out with friends but that isn't often and I would never start again properly. It was really hard but I'm really, really happy I've done it."

In the 2016/17 inspecting year the Care Inspectorate is scoping child sexual exploitation (CSE) practice in children and young people's services. This is part of our contribution to 'Scotland's National Action Plan to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation' and focusses on frameworks of CSE practice, staff understanding and care planning outcomes.

All staff had attended training from CEOP (Child Exploitation and On-Line Protection) which provided guidance on protecting children on online and the dangers of CSE in the community. The provider is currently updating the Child protection policy to make strengthen the information in relation to CSE. Staff members we spoke with demonstrated a good knowledge in relation to CSE displayed a grasp in regard to identifying the risk and vulnerability indicators and had an understanding of the actions required of them in order to protect young people from potential or further harm.

Areas for improvement

At feedback to the inspection we discussed how the health needs would be documented within the GIRFEC framework within the new formatted action plans and the management agreed to take this forward.

Grade

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the environment within the service."

Service strengths

We found that the service performance for this statement was very good.

The views and wishes of young people about the environment was embedded in the choices for and prioritising of the on-going improvement plan for the house and grounds. We found that following suggestions a outdoor activity centre had been constructed, a barbeque area and planting. Young people enjoyed these resources and we could see them in use during the inspection. Within the house the bedrooms had all being decorated and personalised according to the wishes of young people. As a result the bedrooms reflected the interests and personalities of the young people and we could see young people really enjoyed spending time in their rooms, were proud of them and took ownership helping keeping rooms clean and tidy.

Throughout the house the young people had been involved in the choices of soft furnishing and accessories. Photographs of the children and young people taken during fun activities were displayed throughout the house. Words and poems of inspiration chosen by young people were displayed and completed the high standard of personalisation and homely attractiveness within Millholm. Staff and Young people were proud of the Millholm family wall decoration which named all young people and the entire team of staff.

We found vandalism was no longer an issue and staff and young people attributed this to the hard work "making the place nice". A placing social worker described the house as being " The nicest, and most cosily decorated children service I have visited."

Areas for improvement

The service is planning to purchase more garden furniture in lines with the wishes of young people.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

“The accommodation we provide ensures that the privacy of service users is respected.”

Service strengths

We found the service performance for this quality statement to be very good.

We found that staff were respectful of the confidentiality of young people. There was a confidentiality policy for staff which was issued during the induction period and we found staff understood their responsibilities in relation to this.

Staff held changeover meetings to discuss the progress of young people in private and were mindful when children and young people may be around the house. We found that case files were held securely and the office was kept locked when not in use. We found that staff were careful in approaching personal matters with young people and often this would be the undertaken by a member of staff whom had the best relationship with young person. This sensitive approach upheld the values of privacy and dignity.

Young people had individual bedrooms and clearly regarded these as their own space. All held keys which meant that their belongings were secure when they were out. One young person had access to an en-suite, however there were additional bathrooms situated next to bedrooms this meant most young people had close access to their own bathroom and could store personal toiletries within these.

Areas for improvement

The service is hoping to work alongside young people to save adequate finances to purchase new computer equipment which will give more greater access to usage through the home and not just in the communal computer room.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 3

“We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice.”

Service strengths

We found that the service performance for this statement was very good.

Good systems of communication were in place with effective handover discussions, good use of recording and regular team meetings. Staff told us the practice of emailing between shifts had greatly improved communication particularly when returning from a period of rest days. Team meetings were used to discuss the progress of children, reflect on practice, and consider best practice. This included reviewing their own performance in relation to the national care standards.

All staff received individual formal supervision and appraisals and we were told this was valuable time and they felt it was beneficial to their development and understanding of the role.

We found that the progress of staff members in relation to attaining SVQ qualifications had progressed well and that management had qualifications that exceeded the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). We found that staff embraced new learning and were particularly diligent in sourcing out information relating to conditions or social problems which impacted on the children and young people, such as, self harm and suicide awareness, information on specific health conditions and attachment, trauma and loss. The assistant manager took a lead role in staff training and development and provided small sessions on specific topics on a regular basis. Staff told us training opportunities were good and they felt well supported to develop professionally.

All staff were registered with the SSSC.

Areas for improvement

Some of the core training was in need of refreshing. We were told this was due to other pressing priorities within the service and were shown to the training plan which had been compiled to address this.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Statement 4

"We ensure that everyone working in the service has an ethos of respect towards service users and each other."

Service strengths

We found that the service performance for this statement was very good.

Millholm benefits from an experienced management team who have a clear vision of ethos of the house and the expectations of staff in relation to the care and support to be provided. We found staff to be committed and highly motivated to provide the best of care for the young people. The staff team told us that moral was good in the team. They attributed this to being valued and supported by management and having good peer relationships based on trust, respect and openness.

We observed staff interactions with young people were warm and encouraging and played a significant role creating the nurturing environment and ethos of the house. Children and young people told us staff knew them well and could tell when they were upset and in need of support. We were the staff team made it "good living in Millholm, I feel happy here". A young person told us told us that "things were much better" as staff had helped him understand why he got angry and helped how to deal with that."

Staff understood the impact of trauma on young people and worked hard to forge trusting relationships with children and young people. They acknowledged that children had staff members they felt most bonded with and nurtured and respected this. In being flexible to working arrangement's children and young people were supported by their significant staff members at key events, such as, going to the dentist, hospital appointments attending children's hearings, and supervising family contact. We were impressed by the staff teams commitment to making sure children had good experiences, such as taking children considerable distance to attend the (previously) attended school prom making sure the young person felt and looked their best with a new outfit and lovely hairdo. Children and young people told us staff "care for them" and we could see why children thought this of their staff.

Staff members were fully aware of the Scottish Social Services Council code of practice and we found many examples during our inspection of their upholding these in the way they respected and valued the views and opinions of the children and young people.

Areas for improvement

The provider is further developing the 'Spark of Genius' 'Every Second Counts' training which includes matters relating to the self-esteem of young people and the positive and negative impact which can be made by staff interactions. This has to be rolled out to the staff team.

Grade

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Quality theme not assessed

4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

8 Additional Information

We spoke with a independent advocacy worker who described a very good relationship with the service and who was of the view that children and young people living in Millholm were listened too and their views were respected.

9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
24 Mar 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	Not Assessed
		Environment	Not Assessed
		Staffing	Not Assessed
		Management and Leadership	Not Assessed
18 Dec 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good
20 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and Leadership	4 - Good
29 Jul 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	5 - Very Good
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good
22 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	5 - Very Good
		Staffing	5 - Very Good
		Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good
14 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very Good
		Environment	Not Assessed

		Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good 5 - Very Good
12 Oct 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 4 - Good Not Assessed
12 Jan 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate Not Assessed Not Assessed
23 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	Not Assessed 4 - Good 4 - Good Not Assessed
4 Oct 2010	Announced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good Not Assessed Not Assessed 4 - Good

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Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

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