

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Seka Graovac
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide short-breaks for up to nine children and young people who have a learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment. It is run by a private company with a strong Jewish ethos. The service is open for children and young people from any background.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Strong and dynamic management has created a culture in which children and young people's needs are central to the running and development of the service. The excellent quality of the service underpins the outstanding outcomes that children and young people achieve. They have access to a large number of safe learning, fun and leisure opportunities that otherwise might not be available to them. With highly personalised support, they have thrived and made exceptional progress across many aspects of their development. The service has made a significant positive impact on the lives of children and young people and their families.

The safeguarding practice is good. Well trained and highly dedicated staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices.

The management has ambitious plans for the development and improvement of the service that remain firmly on the agenda. This is to ensure that the records more closely match the actual practice, which is outstanding.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The outcomes for the families who receive this service are exceptionally positive. The

service makes a huge difference in the lives of children, young people and their families. Its exceptional high quality enables parents to truly relax and then continue to look after their children with renewed energy and love. Their children continue to benefit from living in a nurturing family environment with additional benefits of having enriching short breaks.

Parents report that their children love their breaks and return home looking very well and happy. They recognise that the service has made a strong contribution to their children's progress in many areas of their development.

Through the service, children and young people have accessed many developmental opportunities that otherwise would not be available to them. Many children, who due to their disabilities were highly anxious about anything new, have become more accustomed to and are better able to embrace new experiences. While in the past, even getting out of their own home was a great challenge, now they are able to engage in an exceptionally wide range of outdoor activities.

They also delight in a very large number of structured indoor activities that stimulate their creativity, learning and relationship with others.

Their perception of new experiences has changed. Children and young people now perceive those experiences as less threatening and more as exiting and pleasurable. Children and young people have become more open to new experiences. They are more willing to explore, engage and learn.

Despite their underlying health conditions, which can be disabling at times, they get involved as much as possible and tremendously enjoy their breaks. They have been enabled to fully participate in making decisions.

They have made exceptional progress in developing their confidence, emotional resilience and skills. They are able to relate to and communicate better with other children and adults.

Over the years, they have become more independent in many aspects of their lives, such as mobility, personal hygiene, eating and sleeping. They have developed better understanding of themselves and the world around them. They continue to attend their schools and make significant educational progress. They have achieved better social integration.

Those children who can express themselves verbally say that they love coming to the service. They say that they love the staff and love their parents. They love being here and love being at home. As one child explained, it is the same but different.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Children and young people and their parents and social workers rate the quality of

this short breaks service exceptionally highly. They use the following words to describe it: 'fantastic', 'brilliant', 'great', 'wonderful', 'amazing', 'excellent', 'very caring', 'very helpful', 'flexible' and 'the most incredible one can have.' A social worker said that in comparison with other children's homes that they have visited, this one is one of the favourites.

What everybody appreciates is that this is a genuinely child-centred service. Staff consistently place the well-being of individual children and young people at the heart of their practice. They have consistently high aspirations for all children and young people and use creative ways to support their progress. The promotion of equal opportunities is fully embedded in the service.

Staff emphasise that although this is a short break service, they are highly motivated to provide holistic support to children and young people. They work very closely with health professionals and teachers to effectively challenge any barriers to children and young people's progress and ensure continuity of care. Parents say that they value immensely that staff take such great care to learn about their children and their needs.

Staff are highly attentive and sensitive towards children and young people. They show great empathy and emotional warmth. They are exceptionally skilled in communicating with children and young people. Makaton signing and effective use of visual cues reinforces excellent communication and help children to increase their vocabulary. Staff's listening skills and supportive attitudes enable children and young people to improve their communication. They have become more able to express themselves and build on their identity and individuality.

Children and young people receive highly individualised support of exceptional quality within highly nurturing and stimulating environment. They are provided with an extremely wide range of additional experiences and opportunities for learning, social interaction and social integration.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Children, young people and their parents have built trusting relationships with the staff and managers of the service. They have full confidence in them.

Children and young people are safe. There have been no safeguarding concerns and no children or young person have been missing. Consistently high staffing levels and staff vigilance also ensure that children and young people do not experience any intimidation or bullying. Staff are highly sensitive to children and young people's

needs and feelings. They take swift and robust actions to protect and provide reassurance when needed. Staff are effective at helping them to build a strong sense of safety. They also consistently help children and young people to develop more balanced, tolerant and respectful attitudes towards others.

Children and young people's behaviour has continued to improve. For example, some children who in the past have required the use of physical restraint on a daily basis for their own safety, have developed much better coping mechanisms. Staff had to physically intervene only on a very few occasions in the last 12 months. The restraints were used appropriately to prevent injury to themselves or other people.

Good safeguarding practice is supported effectively by comprehensive care planning; accurate risk assessments; behaviour management plans and positive intervention plans when necessary. The high commitment of staff and regular staff training on a range of relevant topics, such as child protection, behaviour management, medication and management of complex medical needs contribute to consistently good promotion of children and young people's welfare. The physical environment is well equipped, suitably adapted to the needs of the young people and kept safe through on-going health and safety checks.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

An experienced, competent and passionate Registered Manager has created a culture in which the outcomes for children and young people always come first. The enthusiasm of staff, their utmost dedication and high quality practice are supported through regular supervision, appraisals, team meetings and a comprehensive training programme.

The commitment to continual improvement is strong and the service has continued to improve. The comprehensive external and internal monitoring of practice ensures that the management has a clear and realistic picture of the strengths and weaknesses.

The main improvement relates to the record-keeping. The requirement and the recommendation from the last inspection, both of which related to records have been fully taken into account and acted on. Additional tools for auditing the files have been developed. Staff have also now keep a journal type book titled 'All about me' for each child or young person. These books provide rich evidence of children's involvement in various activities and demonstrate their extraordinary learning and progress. The record-keeping overall is of a very good standard. However, the management is aware that not all records have a hallmark of excellency that would truly match the outstanding quality of the actual staff practice. The record-keeping has remained firmly on the agenda for further improvement.

The recent departure of some permanent staff members has slowed down the

implementation of some improvements. High expectations and robust procedures for selection of new staff mean that it is taking time to recruit. Although the permanent staff team has been temporarily depleted, the management remains committed to always maintaining one-to-one staffing levels and providing continuity of care. This is because they know that having consistency and individual attention helps children and young people to thrive.

The service has very good relationships with the local community and further afield. The management is highly committed to raising disability awareness, sharing good practice and promoting community cohesion. To give some examples: volunteers help with driving, an investment bank developed the front garden and an artist donated a painting specially created for this service. Through a University, the service also provides placements for student nurses.

The development plans for the service are ambitious. Staff have enabled children and young people to be fully involved and to make considerable contributions to the development of the service.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.