

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC010415
Inspection date	19 October 2009
Inspector	Jill Marriott
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	16 April 2009
--------------------------------	---------------

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide respite care for up to nine children and young people under the age of 18 years who have a learning disability and/or a physical disability. On occasion the home supports young people beyond the age of 18 until appropriate alternative services are available.

The home is owned by a Jewish charitable organisation. Jewish religious laws and culture are observed. The home cares for children from different cultural backgrounds and staff are able to meet their religious and cultural needs as long as they do not conflict with the overall ethos of the home.

The home has one emergency bed available for children who meet the admission criteria. One of the stated aims of the home is to work in partnership with parents and the wider professional network to develop a coordinated and accessible support network for children and families.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection all of the key National Minimum Standards were assessed. The ratings in four areas are judged as good the rating for being healthy is judged as outstanding.

The homes Statement of Purpose is being reviewed at present. There is a child's guide that has been simplified for easy reading and made available on disc. Policies and procedures related to medical issues and medication are of a high standard.

Staff receive a good induction to the home and appropriate ongoing training. Each member of staff holds a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in child care or an equivalent qualification.

The home offers children and young people a bright and pleasant environment equipped to meet individual needs. Children's artwork, photographs and paintings showing positive images of people from different background is on display throughout the home.

Action is required to ensure that children's risk assessments are kept up to date and to ensure that staff appraisals are reviewed within the given timescales. Action is also required to ensure that broken blinds in children's bedrooms are replaced.

This home is providing children and young people with safe care and protection in a comfortable environment.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The one requirement made at the last inspection has been met. The staff team are receiving regular recorded supervision. This ensures staff are supported appropriately enabling them to carry out their individual roles and responsibilities in a professional manner.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The food provided for the children and young people shows that staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a healthy balanced diet. Menus are planned weekly. They are varied and flexible and take into account likes, dislikes and specific individual health requirements.

Children and young peoples individual health needs are met within their families. Clear health plans are developed by the service in partnership with families to provide appropriate health care when children are receiving respite care. Specific health needs are identified at the earliest opportunity and where necessary services are sought to address these. The home works in partnership with other professionals such as specialist nurses and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health service when this is required. Where possible children's health plans are discussed with them using communication methods that they can understand. The home keeps in contact with parents to ensure that when children stay at the home full and up to date information about them is available to staff. Health issues that specifically relate to a child's ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith or cultural background are addressed in individual health plans.

The home operates a well developed and effective medication policy, procedure and practice guide which specifically addresses the use of prescribed and non prescribed medication. Staff are required to read the policy and have signed to say they have done so. They are able to show that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Training regarding the administration, safe keeping and disposal of medication is mandatory and refresher courses are held annually. Staff are not allowed to give medication until they have completed the training. If a young person were able to administer their own medication the procedure would be rigorously risk assessed with appropriate safe storage made available. The homes records show that medication is given, stored and disposed of appropriately. All staff have received training in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show respect for the privacy of children and young people and for maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality.

Complaints and concerns raised about the home are taken seriously. The home has a clear complaints procedure. A simplified format is incorporated into the children's guide. A copy of the full policy is available in the introduction pack for families. One complaint has been recorded since the last inspection. This has been fully investigated with actions and outcomes recorded.

Staff have received mandatory child protection training and annual refresher training. They are able to respond to concerns and allegations about children's safety in a professional way. The home has a clear policy and procedure in place which complies with the document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the local safeguarding board guidelines.

There is a bullying policy and procedure available in the home. The one to one staffing level maintained at all times reduces the risk of bullying. Behaviours which are unacceptable are discussed between staff and young people and appropriate steps are taken to minimise any risk to other children.

The home has vigilant security procedures in place to reduce the possibility of very vulnerable children going missing. These include key pads on doors to the outside, magnetic holders on internal doors and high fencing around the garden areas. The home has a policy and procedure to follow when a child is absent without authority. This includes an immediate and rapid search of the local area followed by a police report giving a full description of the child and events and times leading to the disappearance. Once the child is returned safely immediate parties involved are notified followed by a full report for the Director of Operations, placing authority and Ofsted.

Staff base their management of behaviour on encouraging acceptable behaviour. Staff encourage children to understand what behaviours are acceptable and those that are not. Children are viewed very positively in the home and praise is always offered for achievement. Children who may need time out are given the opportunity to go to their own rooms for some private time. All staff are trained to use restraint if this becomes necessary. This procedure is only used as a last resort and no incidents regarding restraints have been recorded in recent years.

The home has risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the grounds and premises. Risk assessments include fire risk and children's behaviour and activities. These assessments are taken into account when planning daily activities trips and outings. Some of the individual risk assessments on children's files have not been reviewed within the stated time scales. There is a good awareness of fire safety amongst staff who receive fire instruction training at the beginning of their employment. The home undertakes fire drills at different times of the day and night. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and detailed records are kept.

The vetting of staff and visitors is comprehensive and thorough. The home is selective with the right person for the job being more important than filling the vacancy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The care plan for each child and young person using this service addresses how support will be provided to meet individual needs. Staff are open to addressing a range of possible needs, including for example those related to disability, race, culture, sexuality, religion and language. Good links are maintained with the schools and health services involved with individual children.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for children and young people. Education is not seen as an activity confined to attendance at school. Children have the opportunity to develop their life skills, they learn through creative play such as home cooking sessions and art and craft work. The home also encourages children to respect others and explore and enjoy their own cultural background.

Children are supported to pursue their own particular interests. The home has an activities co-ordinator who is responsible for developing a range of leisure opportunities. Children are able to participate in activities appropriate to their needs, likes and individual choices. Where appropriate individual hobbies are incorporated into daily plans, specific activities are organised for special occasions and a number of local trips to the park, cinema, bowling and leisure centres are planned throughout the year.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Each child and young person has a clear, easily understandable placement plan. Placement plans show how needs will be addressed and set out the specific roles and responsibilities of key others. They are based upon a thorough assessment and a detailed risk assessment.

The home has a system for reviewing placement plans. The system includes participation in statutory review meetings, internal reviews and observation of and informal discussion with young people in key work sessions. Looked after Children documents (LAC) such as review minutes are kept up to date on children's files. Some information regarding essential information and other LAC documents are not always made available to the home by the relevant local authorities.

The children and young people using the service all receive respite care for an allocated amount of days each year. Dates for respite are planned with the family and relevant local authority. The care provided is in general allocated in one or two days stay at regular intervals throughout the year. Families are welcomed at the home and are able to visit at any reasonable time. Arrangements for maintaining contact between children receiving respite care and their families is addressed in individual placement plans.

Consulting with children and young people, listening to them, discussing the plans for their care with them is part of the care practice in this home. Consultation takes place in many ways and can just be observing the way a young person reacts to a situation. Other young people are able to explain their views orally, in makaton sign or in some cases by pointing things out. The home keeps in contact with families to ensure that they and their children are satisfied with the service provided.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The location of the home is convenient for leisure centres, transport and other local community facilities. Its size and the arrangement of rooms fits well to the needs of the children and young people. Provision for children and young people with disabilities is fully integrated into the design and layout of the home.

The accommodation is homely and decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard. There are some areas that are awaiting attention for example the blinds in some bedroom are broken and need to be replaced as a matter of urgency. The bathrooms although fully functional are waiting to be refurbished. This work is planned to start before the end of this year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a Statement of Purpose. It is clear in setting out what care will be provided and how it will be provided. The children's guide is written in an understandable format and is also available on disc. This has made the document accessible to more young people. There are relevant policies and procedures in place relating to the home.

Staff are clear about which manager is responsible for their support. They confirm that one to one supervision has been regular in the last six months and that time is specifically dedicated to this. Notes are made of supervision meetings and staff confirmed that they feel supported by senior staff.

The staff team is competent with a good range of experience amongst its members. The skills within the team are well matched to the group of children using the service. At least 80% of staff have achieved their National Vocational Qualification level 3 in caring for children and young people. The manager has the relevant skills, experience and qualifications to manage the service.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a balanced mix of male and female staff who represent the different cultural backgrounds of the children and young people. The number of staff on duty each day is sufficient. Children are supported on a one to one staff ratio at all times to ensure their needs are met and they are supported to maintain and improve daily living skills and undertake a range of chosen activities. To avoid disruption in children's care staff vacancies, sickness and leave are covered by bank staff who are well known to the children.

The homes training programme includes a good induction. There are training opportunities available and staff are supported to make use of these. Staff said they have an appraisal and an individual development plan. However not all appraisals have been reviewed within appropriate timescales.

Monthly monitoring visits are carried out regularly and form part of the quality assurance system in place. Action points are identified, followed up by the manager and reviewed each month. Where possible children are spoken to during these visits. The overall monitoring system is centred around the experiences of children and focuses on whether the home is meeting their needs. Effective systems have been established to ensure the smooth running of the home is maintained in a non institutional way.

Children's individual case files are confidentially stored. They are arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable by staff and accessible to children and young people. There is a procedure in place to follow should children request to see their files.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
26	ensure that children's risk assessments are reviewed and kept up dated. Regulation 23 [c]	30 November 2009
28	ensure staff appraisals are reviewed in reasonable timescales. Regulation 27 (4)(a)	30 November 2009
24	ensure that the broken blinds in childrens bedrooms are replace with a suitable alternative. Regulation 31 (2) (c)	30 November 2009

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.