

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC013598
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Peter Albert Davey
Date of last inspection	26/03/2014

Inspection date	28/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This respite service supports children, young people and their families to a very good standard. Children and young people receive very good quality of care. Outcomes are excellent for children, young people and their families. Families have consistently positive views about the quality of care and relationships with staff. A comment from a parent such as 'I feel my daughter is always well cared for when she stays at cherry Trees' supports this view.

The excellent relationships with children, young people, carers and external professionals contribute to the highly individualised needs-based care plans, some of which are complex and require regular reviewing. This also aids transition between home, school and the service ensuring consistency of care is a priority. This is supported by feedback from a placing social worker, 'there is good commitment to joint working with parents and partner agencies and social workers at this service'.

Children, young people and their families are actively involved in the service development through consultation questionnaires, coffee mornings and observation of children and young people's likes and dislikes. Parents feel they can approach staff and any concerns or worries are taken seriously.

Children and young people are very comfortable and happy in staff's presence.

Parents say they feel their children are safe and secure at the setting.

The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and strive to improve wherever possible to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people. Monitoring systems allow the manager and staff team to examine the quality of care they provide and plan for the future.

The one requirement and three recommendations made at this inspection concern the designated child protection lead staff refreshing their training, providing further e safety training for staff, ensuring medication stock control is robust and the updating of forms in relation to requesting references for new staff.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is registered to offer short break placements for children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/03/2014	Interim	good progress
06/01/2014	Full	good
29/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
20/07/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
27 (2001)	the registered person shall ensure that all person's employed receive appropriate training; specifically the local authority child protection lead officer training for the Registered Manager and deputy manager. (Regulation 27 (a))	28/11/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- provide further training for staff on e-safety (NMS 18)
- request a statement of the referees opinion of the applicants suitability to work with children in each reference request undertaken (NMS 16.3 d)
- ensure checking systems for the stock control of medicines are robust and errors in recording stock balances are identified. (NMS 6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

As a result of accessing the respite service at this setting children young people make excellent progress in areas such as making new friends, improved confidence, participating in community activities and accessing the onsite facilities they may not have at home. This is supported by a comment made by a parent; 'my child has been on many activities with Cherry Trees that they otherwise would not have had the chance to experience'. Parents express highly positive feelings about how the service impacts on their lives, enabling them to gain time to give to other family members, whilst knowing their child is safe and happy. Comments such as 'my child communicates her enjoyment of being there by coming home happy and is always happy to go back for the next visit' support this.

The service receives excellent feedback from external professionals about the role the service has in supporting and enabling high levels of attendance and the excellent joint working and communication between the school, home and the setting. The excellent progress children and young people make at school is continued at the setting through the continuity of social learning, behaviour management and health care.

Children and young people benefit from having their general health needs and specific care needs promoted to a very high standard by trained and experienced staff. Support is given to families regarding regular appointments with health professionals such as opticians and dentists. Staff are competent at delivering individualised guidance on areas such as sexual health, relationships and other social issues. Children and young people are encouraged to make choices in areas such as meals and activities they wish to participate in. The staff have a great awareness and understanding of individual conditions and disabilities and as a result are able to plan and offer the best experience they can.

Children and young people are supported and guided in developing a range of practical skills for independent living as well as self-care skills, where appropriate. These range from young people being able to brush their teeth through to assisting with the preparation of meals.

Parents say 'my child loves all of the Cherry Trees staff and thinks of it as family' and 'Cherry Trees is wonderful, we would not function as a family without it'.

Quality of care **good**

Children and young people receive very good quality of care. A strength of the service is the very positive and constructive relationships children, young people and families have with the staff team. This can be seen in the feedback received from parents who say `the care my child gets is always of a good standard and I feel my child is well cared for and am very confident in staff's ability to take care of my child's complex needs`.

The service provides a healthy environment where children and young people are able to enjoy their respite stay and have their physical, emotional and health needs met. Parents feel confident in the staff's ability to do this with comments such as `the staff are able to manage my child's health needs to the standard I would expect to the point I do not need to worry or be concerned when she stays there`. Children and young people who require intimate care needs are cared for with dignity and respect.

Medication administration is in general sound, with clear and safe procedures in place. Parents are confident in the setting's ability to deliver safe medication practices and comment `staff are extremely efficient in knowing my child's medication and when to give it`. At this inspection records showed some minor errors in stock control recording.

Children and young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plans which are supported by very good quality care plans that are in place from the time they arrive to the time they leave. Plans include individual assessments of need, risks and emergency care. In addition plans include individual communication methods so staff are able to successfully communicate with each child or young person. Progress is documented and celebrated no matter how small it may be. Children and young people are able to contribute to their plans mainly by expressing their likes and dislikes in areas such as food and activities. Staff confidently recognise and record all progress made.

Careful consideration of groupings of children and young people when they stay supports friendships, cultural and diverse needs. Each episode of scheduled care is planned and well organised by staff prior to their arrival.

Staff have aspirations for children and young people and support their education placements successfully. A strong commitment to ensuring good communication between the school, home and setting has resulted in excellent relationships with teaching professionals. This ensures continuity of learning when the child or young person is at the service for respite. Parents confirm this by saying `staff reinforce targets being worked on at school and home as well as self care and help skills`. External professionals also comment that `there is good commitment to joint working with parents, schools, partner agencies and social workers.

Children and young people are enabled to follow their individual cultural preferences whilst at the service. Staff support and encourage children and young people to take

part in positive, enriching activities at the service and in the wider community. Children and young people are able to experience activities they may not otherwise do.

Information is available for children, young people and families to raise a concern or complaint. A range of adults involved in children's and young people's lives ensures there is also someone who can raise a concern or worry on their behalf. Staff know when children and young people are unhappy or in pain as a result of the strong relationships they form. Parents confirm that if a concern is raised it is treated seriously and sympathetically.

Children and young people enjoy the specialist play equipment in the garden and in the house in the soft play areas. The home is well maintained.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Children and young people's safety is a priority in this service. Staff understand their individual needs and vulnerabilities and do all they can to protect them from abuse and harm. As a result children's and young people's body language shows they are comfortable and happy. Parents are confident that their children are looked after safely and have confidence in the staff's ability to keep their children safe. Feedback from parents includes, 'in the time my child has been staying at Cherry Trees she has always been safe and secure' and 'despite the mixture of children staff seem to be aware of my child's vulnerabilities due to her condition'. Staff know the children and young people well and can identify if they are unhappy or worried.

There are clear procedures in place if staff are concerned about a child's safety. These procedures work alongside the local authority child protection and safeguarding procedures. The Registered Manager is the dedicated lead for child protection and he is supported by the deputy manager in his absence. Both have received training, however they now require dedicated lead child protection officer's training in the very near future to ensure they remain up to date with local and national procedures. The staff team receive regular child protection and safeguarding training. The service now needs to focus on e-safety training for children and young people with increased vulnerabilities and poor communication.

Positive behaviour is promoted with very good outcomes. Sanctions are not used as they are deemed not suitable to the children's and young people's needs. 'Time out' is used as a calming tactic with good recording when it is used. Positive behaviour is rewarded and children and young people receive praise for the small successes as well as the bigger ones. This practice results in physical interventions rarely being used. Children and young people do not go missing due to the high level of supervision by staff. Some are not able to go missing because of the nature of their disability. Staff are very aware of the protocol in place should this occur.

Recruitment of staff is safe, providing protection for children and young people. Volunteers go through the same process of checks as permanent staff. Current requests for references do not include a specific statement asking for the referee's opinion of the person's suitability to work with children. All other checks are robustly carried out and provide a comprehensive recruitment record of each applicant.

Children and young people are protected from fire and other hazards as a result of thorough health and safety procedures. As a result the service is safe and secure for children and young people to enjoy their time at this respite service.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2002. He has appropriate qualifications to fulfil his role. He has a Bachelor of Arts in educational special needs plus a National Vocational Qualification level 4 in children and young people's social care, which includes a management qualification. He is an efficient and effective manager who has the respect of his staff, parents and professionals. The service is overseen by a committee of trustees who are hugely supportive of the Registered Manager and of the service.

The Registered Manager is supported by strong deputy manager and a stable staff team which enables children and young people to receive strong and consistent care. The stable, committed and experienced staff team enjoy their roles. One member of staff stated 'I am proud as punch to work here'. Parents also speak positively about the staff with comments such as 'staff are always so positive, friendly and caring' and 'staff are enthusiastic and this encourages me that they enjoy working there and looking after children'.

The service meets its aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose. Staff understand the aims of the service and keep diversity and anti-discriminatory practice central to their work. The children's and young people's guide provides clear information in a friendly and adaptable format.

Complaints are low due to the excellent relationships formed with children, young people, families and professionals. All have confidence in the setting's ability to address any issues raised in a timely and professional manner.

Staffing levels are dependent on the number and needs of the children and young people staying. Rotas show there are sufficient numbers on day and night. An on call system provides staff with senior advice and guidance if needed. Staff receive regular supervision and training that ensures their practice is safe and up to date. There is a very high number of staff with National Vocational Qualifications and many with higher level qualifications.

The home is regularly monitored by monthly visits carried out by an independent

professional who reports back to the Registered Manager on any areas requiring improvement. In addition to this the Registered Manager submits a report every three months to both the trustees and Ofsted on how effective the service is and how improvements can be made.

Individual records are clear, up to date and stored securely. They contribute to an understanding of the child's stay at this respite service.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.