

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	28 September 2009
Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	19 February 2009
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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

The children's home registered to offer placements to children with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and children with sensory impairment on a respite basis. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation. The home is a respite facility and accommodates children of both genders up to 18 years of age. It is currently offering a respite service to over 80 children and young people.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection took place on a weekday. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key national minimum standards.

The manager and the experienced staff team continue to provide an outstanding standard of care. The home tries to ensure the safety of the children through comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. The home provides the children with excellent emotional and physical support and encourages the children with their education and interests. The home ensures that specific and comprehensive information is in place to enable statutory reviews to take place. Children are given opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The home is maintained to an outstanding level, providing a homely environment for the children to live in. The staff are supported by an experienced manager and excellent comprehensive systems that include supervision and training.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home received two recommendations at the last inspection in connection with ensuring continued development of the staff recruitment guidance and ensuring continued development of the staffing policy. Both recommendations have now been met and the home has redeveloped its staff recruitment and staffing policy to meet the recommendations in the national minimum standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work hard to encourage children to eat a healthy diet which meets their individual dietary needs. Each mealtime has a set meal but due to dietary needs several versions are prepared to suit individual need. Clear understanding by staff was observed when preparing food for specific needs. The children do undertake some cooking as an activity. Staff are given training to run a safe and clean kitchen in order to produce meals for the children. The home strives to meet all cultural needs when looking at dietary needs.

The health and welfare of children is carefully considered and actively promoted. The placement plans contain comprehensive health information. Staff work very hard to consider the children's health and welfare needs and adopt a holistic approach when creating care plans. Sexual health and information related social and welfare issues are taught in school and age appropriate information is readily available in the home. The children's health is seen as highly important and staff are trained and informed to meet their special needs.

Staff manage the children's health needs, in a comprehensive manner with excellent systems in place to safeguard their needs. All staff are trained in first aid. All prescribed medication is kept securely and records are accurate with a robust stock taking system. Only trained senior staff are able to administer medication. Medical consents are available for emergency treatment, first aid and the administration of medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure that children's confidentiality and privacy is respected and safeguarded by knocking on bedroom doors. Confidential information relating to each child is kept in an appropriate locked facility. All information is contained in the office/sleeping in room. Staff receive guidance on the confidentiality of information. Children in need of assistance to carry out personal care are treated with dignity and respect.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately and staff enable children to make complaints. Children's complaints would be taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. A file holding compliments and thanks was seen which gave positive feedback about the care in the home. Staff communicate through one to one sessions to seek the children's views and concerns.

Staff receive child protection training in their induction programme and also in subsequent refresher courses during their employment. The home has a clear policy when dealing with child protection which includes up to date safeguarding guidance. No child protect incidents have been recorded since the last inspection.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying and the children are made aware of the guidance on admission. Children's behaviour is identified and risk assessed within their behaviour management plans. Bullying is not identified as a problem at the home.

There is a policy and procedure for reporting children who are absent without authority. Records of absconding show there have not been any incidents. Staff are provided with clear guidance to address such situations with robust risk assessments in place to highlight any concerns the children may pose to themselves or others.

Records examined indicated that serious incidents are reported as required by regulation. The manager confirmed that serious incidents are investigated and they also involve other agencies.

Staff try to work on positives rather than negatives to encourage the children around behaviour. The children share good supportive relationships with staff and are given opportunities to discuss issues and life within the home in one to one sessions with key workers and in the group meetings. All sanctions are recorded in a dedicated book, no sanctions have been given since the last inspection.

All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint. The home has a policy which offers guidance to staff in behaviour management and restraint. The children have risk assessments in place these are contained within their behaviour management plans. Staff encourage appropriate and acceptable behaviour. A small amount of restraint is used at the home. Staff support the children with their behaviour through appropriate professional relationships.

Areas of potential risk for the young people are assessed and the children are safeguarded where possible from harm. The home has comprehensive documentation related to risk assessing activities, fire risk and the environment. The home is coming to the end of the building work for the new extension, the building work and site are clearly risk assessed. Records demonstrate that the home's fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuation exercises carried out. Clear systems are in place and checks were seen from outside agencies and from the home's monitoring systems. The home operates a system to monitor visitors. The home carries the appropriate amount of insurance.

Records of new staff employed since the last inspection indicate that staff are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process. The records show that all the necessary and required checks are completed prior to staff working with children. Volunteer staff from overseas hold safety checks from their country of origin.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children receive considerable individual support, guidance and care. Staff adopt a holistic approach and staff are imaginative and creative when looking at ways of providing care. Placement plans are in place, listing comprehensively the needs of the children. The children observed appeared to be at ease in the company of all the staff on duty, and social interaction was both spontaneous and warm. Staff are very supportive and sensitive to any needs or situation the children experience.

Staff actively support children in their education. Each child has clear records on file of their progress at school. The home has facilities and equipment to support children's education such as computers, books, games and play items. Staff spoken with confirmed that there is regular liaison with the children's schools.

Staff facilitate access to activities and clubs within the community. Individual and group activities are specifically geared towards each child's own choice and currently include swimming and local facilities. The home has lots of its own facilities and child focussed play areas including a brilliant sensory room. Each activity is risk assessed to minimise the risk factor for each child. Staff organise a wide range of trips and activities which are enjoyed as a group. The home has its own transport to support social and recreational activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's needs are assessed prior to placement. Comprehensive documentation is kept on file to information on each child. Children have excellent placement and care plans that identify their health, physical, social, educational cultural and leisure needs. Key workers review the progress of each child and identify changes to meet individual needs. Key working staff with the manager produce thorough reports for review where appropriate. Placing authorities operate a reviewing process to chart the progress of the children.

A written admission procedure aims to help children settle in. The children are provided with a appropriate guide on admission which is produced in two formats. Every effort is made by staff to ensure that arrivals and departures are planned. Staff confirm that preparation for

leaving starts well in advance of an agreed date. The home would only ever offer emergency placements to children all ready known to the service.

Children at the respite service live at home with their parents and carers. Any contact issues are

arranged outside of the service. Written notes on telephone calls whilst staying at the home could be seen on file.

Staff consult children on a daily basis and empower them, as far as it is possible, to consider their circumstances, behaviours, relationships and interactions. The children are provided with forums both formally and informally to discuss any choices and views they may have. This can be with their key workers or with any staff member. Staff strive to create an inclusive, reflective and participatory environment that encourages consultation. This appears to be effectively balanced by realistic boundaries.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Due to the nature of the home it does not undertake direct work with pathway plans. However, as mentioned throughout the report they do begin to teach the children independence skills in preparation for getting older.

A tour of the building indicated the home's location, design and size are in keeping with its purpose. The home has a large and child centred garden which is safe for the children to play in. The home utilises the local community for activities. Records demonstrated that the home is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments and had certification relating to gas, electrical and fire equipment.

The accommodation is clean and tidy and provides each young person with both communal areas for group living and individualised private areas, such as their bedrooms, where they can spend time alone. Bedrooms are decorated with beautiful murals which helps the children to recognise the bedrooms when stay overnight. There are adequate bathroom and toilet facilities. Bathroom are equipped with specialist facilities to meet the needs of the children. Sleeping in staff have their own room and bathroom.

The home was observed to have a number of communal areas and rooms including two lounge areas which are filled with areas specifically designed for the children including a soft play area a quiet area equipped with lots of soft toys and a lounge with a large television, ball pool, music system and soft furnishings, a large dining room and playroom. The house is purposely built for the children and has excellent facilities. The new extension is yet to be finished which will provide a new commercial kitchen, large dinning room, new reception area and laundry room which will free up other areas for the children.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff ensure through practice and guidance that the rights of the children are met and they do not face racism or discrimination.

The children have their needs met by individualised care planning and review processes which highlights and guides staff to meet the wishes of the children themselves.

The management of the home is outstanding and the manager provides a consistent and comprehensive approach. Children benefit from having a core team which has been in place for several years. The statement of purpose provides adequate information about the home's services. The children's guide is in an appropriate format. The children are provided with a copy of the guide when they arrive at the home.

The young people benefit from a staff team that is made up of both genders and has a cultural mix together with a balance of youth and maturity. The staff are provided with extensive training including child protection, behaviour management, health and safety, fire safety, as well as qualifications and training specifically geared towards those children using the home. The staff are trained in National Vocational Qualifications. The children also benefit from a staff team who are supported and supervised on a regular basis.

External monitoring of the home's systems and practices occurs on a monthly basis with reports being kept in hard copy and sent into Ofsted. The manager responds to findings and monitors practices to ensure standards are maintained. The home is part of a recognised group of therapeutic services that monitor practice in each other's services.

Systems are in place to monitor the daily lives of the children living in the home. Children's files are maintained and organised and kept securely in the staff office.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.