

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC013743
Inspection date	13/10/2010
Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	22/04/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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 Crispins, 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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 is a home offering placements to 19 children: 15 children with learning disabilities between the ages of five years and 18 years of age, and up to four places for children with a physical disability. It is split into four separate units, three of which offer residential services and one provides three places for respite care.

The home is located in a quiet village, it has an extensive playground for use by the children and security gates are fitted to the rear of the site. Limited parking is available.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an interim unannounced inspection. The main focus of the inspection was on how well the home promotes and safeguards children's welfare. The inspection also looked at economic well-being and the improvements to the environment since the last inspection.

This continues to be an outstanding service in that it meets all the regulations and standards consistently. The home provides a warm, stable and secure environment that enables children to make progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff are highly motivated and committed to providing the best possible care for children while ensuring that they enjoy a safe, fun and educational environment.

A holistic approach is taken to the care of each child and any changing needs are observed and promptly addressed. Staff take an active interest in their overall well-being and development and strive to support them to reach their potential.

Management and monitoring systems within the service are also of an excellent standard and detailed records are maintained and kept up to date. The service has a consistent record of improvement and development and continues to seek ways to improve the service for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations set at the key inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect children's privacy and confidentiality consistent with good parenting and the need to protect children. Children have single bedrooms and the bathroom arrangements promote privacy and dignity. The accommodation provides space where children can relax easily and spend time alone when they wish. Information about children is held securely in the office.

Families know how to complain on behalf of their children and they also appreciate and compliment staff on the standard of care that their children receive. Families are clear that the concerns they have will be taken seriously, and addressed promptly. They have access to information about the complaints procedure and staff encourage the parents and carers to let them know when they have concerns if they are unhappy about any aspect of the care.

Bullying in the unit is rare, however, relationships between children are monitored closely and any issues addressed promptly. Being absent without permission within the unit is almost non-existent as staff ratios are high and the building secure to keep children safe, as a result of their complex needs and vulnerabilities. However, risk assessments are completed for any young person where there is an identified risk of them going missing and action is taken to minimise this risk.

The home has clear systems in place that safeguard children from abuse. Clear guidance is recorded in children's care plans regarding their communication needs both verbal and non-verbal to enable staff to identify signs of distress or anxiety and report this accordingly. Staff receive regular training regarding safeguarding issues.

A positive approach is taken to managing difficult behaviour. Very detailed behaviour management support plans are developed for children as part of their care plan. These include details of what circumstances may trigger certain behaviour and how staff should respond to minimise the impact of this behaviour on the young person and others. Staff liaise with other professionals to develop and implement creative strategies to support children and reduce incidents of challenging behaviour.

Staff receive training relating to behaviour management and physical intervention; however, restraint techniques are rarely used in the unit. Sanctions are only imposed if they are meaningful to the individual young person involved and are dependent on the level of understanding of that young person

Children live in a safe environment. They are protected by a comprehensive range of

detailed health and safety procedures and risk assessments. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and secure. The home's thorough quality assurance systems ensure that the checks are carried out consistently and any problems are immediately addressed.

Robust systems are in place for the recruitment of staff. Appropriate checks are completed prior to staff commencing work in the home and Criminal Records Bureau checks are renewed as required to ensure the safety of children who use the unit. The home has strong systems in place for vetting and supervising visitors to ensure children are safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The physical environment inside and outside of the home remains a priority and demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that all parts of the home are accessible to the children living in the home. The home is located in a quiet village, and it has an extensive playground for use by the children.

The playground at the rear of the home has been further developed to improve the facilities for children. The sensory garden and the maze are wheelchair accessible. There is a new log cabin in the garden and there are a variety of swings, including a bed swing, that are accessible for children with severe physical disabilities. These are safety compliant with European standards. There is also a trampoline, sand pit and raised flower beds.

The front garden that serves the respite unit has also been developed with a new log cabin, trampoline, a totem pole and raised flower beds. The service has developed a classroom environment within the home to encourage children that cannot attend school to receive education within the home. The home has purchased two new minibuses that are wheelchair accessible and this makes it possible for the children to have more outdoor activities. The furniture and décor within the unit are of a good standard. Any maintenance issues are promptly reported and addressed.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home is very well run and the quality of care is consistently outstanding. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide were recently reviewed and a new handbook is being developed. Children are looked after by a very competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience. The skills within the team match the needs of children living in the home. The staff team reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children living in the home and provide both positive male and female role models for children. The numbers of staff on duty meet the needs of children. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and appointments.

The vast majority of the staff have achieved a recognised childcare qualification or are working towards gaining one. Staff have good access to suitable training. The training programme covers the needs of children and provides staff with the skills and knowledge to effectively do their jobs.

Staff are very well supported by the manager and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They know who they contact for support should the manager not be available. In addition, supervision and team meetings take place regularly to allow the staff team to discuss and review individual children, the running of the home, staff development and training and to look at ways to improve the service they offer.

The home has very good systems to review the quality of care provided. Monitoring of the home according to regulations is carried out monthly. They identify areas for improvement and steps are always taken to address the issues.

The home's written records provide a clear picture of individual children's needs, development and progress. Children's records are well organised and contain up-to-date information about them, including relevant documents from placing authorities.