

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Elaine Clare
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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 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

The children's home is run by a registered charity. This is a large one-storey building specially designed for use as a children's home and day care centre. It offers up to five respite care places for children with learning disabilities who may also have physical disabilities, plus day care for up to five children of both genders, with severe learning disability who may have an associated physical disability. The service is offered on a planned basis over a yearly cycle for up to 65 children who are accommodated between one and 21 days at a time.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection of the home against the key National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. It took place during a normal week and six children took part in the inspection process. The overall judgement of the inspection is that the service continues to provide appropriate care to children and that they enjoy positive outcomes from their respite care experiences. The service is very good at meeting the diversity of needs demonstrated by the group of children receiving respite care. Staff know the children well and are able to adapt their approach to suit the individual. There is clear leadership and management and ongoing commitment to the development of services to children with individual needs. There are three actions and two recommendations made as a result of this inspection. This includes the need for regular external monitoring of the home.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection it was recommended that at least 80% of staff have National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people. This has now been achieved.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff continue to promote the welfare of children and young people using the service by encouraging them to eat healthy food and enjoy activities that give them exercise and fresh air. There is appropriate guidance and training available to enable the safe handling of medication by staff during children's respite stays.

Parents expressed their satisfaction with these arrangements and the range of

healthy food on offer at the service. Children attending the service at the time of inspection were happily engaged in constructive play while they waited for their evening meal. They enjoyed a selection of food of their choosing for tea together with a good exchange of banter with staff before settling down for evening.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service promotes the welfare of children and protects them well. Policy and procedure is underpinned by good practice and training. Children's individual needs are well noted and known to staff who provide individually tailored approaches to respite care. Staff work together with parents and other professionals to protect children from harm and promote their well-being.

The main issues for the home revolve around the diversity of needs of the children using the service, their appropriate grouping and the management of behaviour while retaining an atmosphere of fun and learning throughout respite stays. The service meets these challenges well through adaptive and reflective practice. Staff are experienced in caring for children with individual needs, they know the children and respond to their needs by using praise, reward schemes and encouragement.

Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with on an individual basis usually with verbal reminders. Sanctions are used infrequently and with the agreement of parents. The format of the physical management book does not record the child's name. Safeguarding issues have been channelled appropriately as have complaints or concerns raised by parents.

The physical environment in which the service operates is well maintained. The home is regularly serviced. The home is due a fire drill with the last one completed in August 2010. A fire drill has yet to be practised at night when minimal staff are on duty. There are good arrangements in place for the safe recruitment of staff through the central recruitment team and by the Registered Manager.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

As a respite service the main responsibility for education remains with parents and the local authority. This service supports children with their education by having them ready for school following a respite stay and by attending individual education reviews. These reviews are usually followed by in-house reviews all of which contribute to building and continuing an up-to-date assessment of needs for an individual child.

During the school holidays there is an emphasis on respite stays being fun times using the full facilities of the service and the local leisure amenities. As such the outcomes for children at this inspection were that they enjoyed a variety of trips and

outings arranged by staff, while children were very much part of the decision making process about where to go.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are based on those identified through core assessments and then written up as a placement plan for individual children. There are in-house reviews and education reviews, but no children are considered to be children in care and subject to full statutory reviews. In-house reviews are held with parents and recorded with any agreed actions being fed into updated care plans for the individual.

Children have plenty of opportunities to contribute their views on the running of the home and activities that take place. They have been involved in staff selection and have voiced their wishes to have certain inappropriate references to the nature of the service removed from the home's paperwork.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children using the service adapt well to their time in the home. They are familiarised with the home through tea time visits first before coming for an overnight stay. Parents state their children are pleased to have respite in the service and happy while at the home. Stays are for minimal periods, there are only five children at any time and a lot of time is spent out of the house.

When in the house there are plenty of age-appropriate games and toys to play with as well as outside activities, such as the swings and soft-play areas in the garden. The quiet area and sensory room have added to the facilities available to children and young people. Children and young people are encouraged to share staff time and the facilities of the home throughout their stays. There is continuous reinforcement of positive behaviour and the principles of communal living.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home was not operating within its Statement of Purpose. It is providing long term care for a child in a respite service. This blocks a bed, which in turn reduces the availability of respite for other families. The Statement of Purpose did not contain a current staff list or the age range of children it can provide care for, which is displayed correctly on the certificate.

The organisation and leadership of the service is good with clear arrangements for a suitable person to deputise in the absence of the Registered Manager. Staff receive

induction training as well as annual core training and refreshers. There are opportunities for developmental training and these issues would be part of staff supervision and personal development. Staff supervision records in relation to formal and informal sessions were not up to date or showed the recommended frequency.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff treat every child as an individual and respond to a wide variety of needs with the same commitment and enthusiasm. There is an emphasis on enabling every child to achieve their maximum potential and to experience a range of opportunities.

There was satisfactory intuitive awareness and knowledge of the operating standards within the home but insufficient hard evidence to support the regular internal monitoring of standards of care being delivered. The organisation has failed to visit the home on a monthly basis with visits only being conducted in March, July and November 2010. On each of these visits no children were present in order to observe their behaviour or to ask their views on the service.

There are a number of staff vacancies being covered by regular relief staff and this situation is likely to continue until the organisational review is completed. All staff are subject to safe recruitment and selection procedures and visitors to the home are also checked in by staff. Parents expressed very positive views about the organisation and leadership of the service. They felt confident that their children were safe while in respite care, had good communications with staff and were kept informed of significant events.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
1	include in the Statement of Purpose all matters listed in Schedule 1; in particular paragraph five and eight of that Schedule (Regulation 4)	31/01/2010
28	ensure that all persons receive appropriate supervision (Regulation 27.4)	31/01/2011
32	undertake monthly visits as set out in Regulation 33. (Regulation 33)	31/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that a written record of restraint includes the name of the child concerned (NMS 22)
- implement a fire drill at regular intervals with at least an annual drill at night. (NMS 26.8)