

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028599
Inspector	Natalie Burton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Ruth Kirchner
Date of last inspection	24/02/2014

Inspection date	03/02/2015
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good service that provides positive outcomes for children and young people. The key strengths lie within the staff team who deliver excellent quality of care. They are motivated with passion and enthusiasm and fully understand the needs of children and young people. Staff use individualised communication systems in order to support children and young people to express their views.

Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of the children and young people's care and the service in general. Children and young people are kept safe by staff who follow guidance in care plans and risk assessments to ensure children and young people's safety is prioritised. Children and young people are engaged in education and attendance and achievement is encouraged and supported by staff.

However, the service does not have an independent visitor, and internal monitoring does not robustly improve the quality of care. In addition improvement is needed to some records, and effective sharing of information to placing authorities. The manager has not notified the local authority of children and young people placed at the home. These areas are all related to management and effective monitoring procedures and do not impact currently on the excellent quality of care provided.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a privately-owned children's home which provides residential care for up to seven young people with learning difficulties who may also have a physical disability. It is operated across two adjacent houses.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
21/01/2014	Full	good
14/02/2013	Interim	good progress
31/05/2012	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
33 (2001)	ensure subject to paragraph (2), the registered provider shall appoint, at the registered providers expense, an independent person to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with this regulation (Regulation 33(1))	20/03/2015
34 (2001)	maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1)(b))	20/03/2015
12B (2001)	notify in writing, the local authority for the area in which the home is located without delay of the admission of a child into; and the discharge of a child from the children's home. (Regulation 12B	20/03/2015

	(1)(a and b))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure staff have appropriate training if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure records are clear, up to date, and contribute to an understanding of the child's life (NMS 22)
- ensure effective sharing of information held in the home's records about the child and information held in the responsible authorities records. (NMS 22.7)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people thrive in a home that is both nurturing and structured. For example, they engage with staff regarding self-regulating their behaviour, trying new foods, new activities and experiences. This is due to a structured and clear behaviour management framework that includes all involved in the care of the child. Children and young people who have experienced significant trauma and present with complex and challenging behaviours grow in confidence and can express themselves positively. They are treated with respect and are enabled to channel their individuality, skills and abilities into achievement and significant improvement.

Children and young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle, they eat a balanced diet and make choices on their likes and dislikes. Where children and young people have specific dietary needs, staff follow this regime and contribute to planning where any individual progress could be promoted. Children and young people increase their skills. For example, children and young people now initiate conversations, and sit at the table with their peers.

Children and young people achieve positive outcomes within a caring and supportive environment. This is because their progress is based on their assessed abilities and needs. Children and young people are consistently stimulated at this setting. They physically benefit from an active and varied lifestyle enjoying holidays, attending youth clubs, going to the library, horse riding, shopping and reading books. As a result, their self-esteem is increased because they are celebrated as individual, supported and encouraged and praised throughout their day.

Children and young people make significant progress in areas such as their communication skills, regulating their behaviour, responding to their peers appropriately, learning about their cultural heritage, reading, writing and diet. They develop the ability to form and maintain attachments through their hard work and with the help and support of staff and professionals. They feel valued because they are encouraged to express their views, feelings and wishes; and listened to because staff make time to talk about their interests.

Children and young people benefit from appropriate contact with their family and are supported by staff. Visits are arranged and staff ensure contact takes place. One parent said 'I am made to feel welcomed. It is a good place, nice and clean'. Another parent reported 'the staff make me feel relaxed and I don't worry'. This means that children and young people are constantly in touch with those who are significant to them and ensures important bonds are maintained and strengthened.

Children and young people are successfully prepared for independence, according to their age and ability. They help prepare the dining table for meals, develop their self-

care skills, and are encouraged to keep their room tidy. Staff have worked creatively with young people to enable them experiences that they may otherwise miss, from spending time shopping to positive self-image with trips to the hairdresser. Children and young people blossom with this sensitive and friendly support.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children and young people are looked after by a dynamic and dedicated staff team who implement structures and effective frameworks for care, safety and behaviour. The safety and individual needs of each child placed are central to all practice in the home. Staff promote a stimulating and stable environment for children and young people to thrive. They are committed to engaging, developing and maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships with children and young people. These relationships are a key strength to strong outcomes for children and young people. A parent described the service as 'excellent'. Another parent who described the service as 'everything they do is excellent' supports this.

Children and young people have a range of communication and learning difficulties and staff are creative about interpreting meaning in speech, gesture, body language, eye contact, symbols and photographs. This valuing of their diverse strengths and needs means that when children and young people have something to say, whether positive or negative, they are confident that staff will find out what they means. This skilled support means that children and young people develop a positive and confident sense of self.

Staff understand the individuality of children and young people and this is usefully documented in children and young people's files. There is a strong identification with individuality, celebrating difference and promoting equality. Staff provide an environment where children and young people can express themselves and explore and develop their awareness of diversity and equality.

Care and education planning, risk management procedures and behaviour management plans of a good quality. They are practically detailed and give clarity to how staff are to support each young person. Placement care plans support children and young people's emotional development, behaviour and learning processes. They enable children and young people to set goals to reach their full potential.

The service makes excellent arrangements to make sure that children and young people experience a full range of activities in the home and the community. They have fun, try new activities, practise skills in cooking and looking after themselves. Children and young people do all of this with help from a staff team who really enjoy their work and are energetic and creative.

The physical health needs of children and young people are met because staff have extensive knowledge of their health needs, and follow detailed procedures that

promote good healthy lifestyles for children and young people. Staff are trained in first aid and the administration of medication. They support children and young people to take part in a range of purposeful activities. This enhances their personal and social development. Children and young people gain knowledge as appropriate to their age and understanding, around keeping safe and making informed lifestyle choices.

Staff are efficient in encouraging children and young people to attend their educational provision. They support young people in their educational placement, and homework. A school said they have a 'good working relationship, the staff attend meetings and there is good communication'. This provides children and young people with the required support they need. Staff respond confidently because they strongly understand children and young people's needs.

The location of the home provides easy access to a range of community resources and activities. The service provides a homely, stimulating and welcoming environment. Children and young people have their own rooms and these are personalised. The home provides young people with good individual and communal accommodation that is decorated and maintained to a high standard.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff take their responsibilities seriously for keeping children and young person safe. There are effective arrangements to safeguard children and young people. This is because staff promote a culture that ensures children and young people are listened to and respected as individuals. Children and young people who use this service have limited means of communication. However, feedback from parents and social workers is that children and young people are happy and safe.

While the service has not had to make a child protection or safeguarding referral, there are policies and procedures in place and staff demonstrate a good understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about children and young people's safety or well-being. Staff receive regular child protection training and have good knowledge about safeguarding children and young people; as a result children and young people are protected.

Staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all children and young people are supervised, kept safe and receive appropriate support. As a result, children and young people do not go missing, and do not identify bullying as an issue in the home.

Children and young people make positive and constructive relationships with staff and each other and staff model calm, sociable behaviour. The service implements positive behavioural strategies and works consistently about challenging behaviour. Staff have managerial support, training and a good understanding about the impact

that children and young people's sensory needs have on their understanding, interactions and behaviour.

The home has in place established systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the children and young people cared for at the home. Children and young people are additionally protected because they regularly participate in fire evacuation drills, and have personal emergency evacuation plans. This means that they know the correct steps to take in the event of an emergency.

An effective and robust recruitment process that includes a comprehensive check on all staff applying to work at this setting protects children and young people. Personnel records are maintained to a good standard. Visitors are monitored and sign in and out of the visitors book.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2013 and is also the Responsible Individual with over twenty years' experience of working with children and young people. The Registered Manager is currently completing their level 5 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and sets out the aims and objectives for the home and a children's guide reflects these. A social work said 'we would not continue to place if they didn't meet his needs. It has been a very positive placement'. The service has a developmental plan that is implemented by the manager and staff. It outlines the aims and objectives to improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Such as, updating one of the en-suite bathrooms into a wet room. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

The organisation does not have an external visitor. This is because the organisation previously did not need one, as the Responsible Individual is the Registered Manager. However, the organisation has not made changes to this in line with regulations. The Registered Manager does complete monthly monitoring, and these have been submitted quarterly to Ofsted. However, this lack of independent monitoring, does not ensure that the service continually drives improvement in all areas. Also, internal monitoring does not robustly improve the outcomes and quality of care for young people.

Children and young people benefit from experienced, imaginative and stable staff team. An appointment of a deputy manager has strengthened the management structure and provides clear accountability and leadership. Staff enjoy their work, have good working conditions and opportunities to develop areas of interest. They

are clearly motivated by their enjoyment of working with children and young people and watching them progress. There is always enough staff on duty at all times to provide safe care and this gives staff plenty of opportunities to spend quality time with the children and young people. As a result, young people's progress is clearly evidence and noted by placing authorities.

Staff report good formal and informal support from senior staff. Training is of a good quality, and a high proportion of staff have a suitable qualification in working with children and young people. However, not all staff have training around facilitating contact. This does not fully ensure that all staff are aware of the reason why observation is required when supervising contact for children and young people.

The Registered Manager notifies all significant events about the safety and protection of children and young people to parents, the placing authorities and to Ofsted. The service is transparent and accountable for actions to promote children and young people's welfare. However, the manager has not notified the local authority of the admission and discharges of children and young people at the home. While there is minimal impact on children and young people, this is not in line with regulation.

Children and young people's records are up to date and stored securely. However, not all records are clear in their recording of the action taken in response to information, and that it has been shared with the placing authorities. For example, it is unclear that potential triggers of young people's anxiety has been communicated to the placing authority. This does not ensure that all information known is effectively shared.

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.