

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC029950
Inspector	Janice Hawtin
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Somerset County Council
Registered person address	County Hall Taunton Somerset TA1 4DY

Responsible individual	Robert Eveleigh
Registered manager	Tammie Jane Rose
Date of last inspection	19/02/2014

Inspection date	09/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The home provides a sound quality of care to children and young people, many of whom present with complex needs. There is an emphasis on them enjoying their time in the home and in enriching their experiences and opportunities. Parents are positive about the home, and the staff, who one parent described as 'fabulous'.

A new Registered Manager is seconded to work in the home. In a short space of time she has made significant progress in addressing previous shortfalls and updating the practice in line with current expectations, requirements and standards. There has been specific focus on promoting improved outcomes and refining the quality of care provided to children and young people. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are understood and a development plan is in place.

Care planning is detailed and takes into account the decisions made at multi-agency reviews. This allows for consultation and agreement with both parents and professional stakeholders ensuring all are working to agreed aims and goals.

Most shortfalls relate to record keeping and effective monitoring of the home, with some additional issues around the provision of suitable shower facilities and some areas of the environment. The current impact on children and young people of these shortfalls is indiscernible. Given the rate of improvements to date I am assured that

these can be dealt with by the current manager and the staff team to avoid jeopardising the welfare or safety of children and young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to ten children and young people. The service can provide a home and a short break service for children and young people who may have a physical disability and/or a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2014	Interim	good progress
14/08/2013	Full	adequate
19/06/2013	Full	inadequate
08/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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
31 (2001)	ensure that there are within the children's home a suitable number of appropriate shower facilities (Regulation 31(5)(b))	10/11/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons employed in the children's home receive appropriate supervision, this applies both to permanent, temporary and agency staff (Regulation 27(3)(a))	27/10/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include detail of the matter listed	27/10/2014

	in(3)(a)-(i) and (4)(a)&(b) of this regulation (Regulation 17B(3)(a)-(i), (4)(a)&(b))	
26 (2001)	take all reasonable steps during the recruitment of staff and when undertaking vetting checks, to obtain full information in respect of each of the matters listed in schedule 2. (Regulation 26 (6)(a))	27/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the independent person completing quality assurance visits under Regulation 33 is satisfied that the home has an effective approach to behaviour management, and routinely examines records of restraint, and ensures recommended actions match the concerns raised in the report. A copy of these reports should be forwarded to Ofsted without delay (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 5: Children's Homes 3.12)
- provide a comfortable environment which is well maintained and decorated (MNS 10.3)
- ensure that monitoring of the home by the manager identifies shortfalls in compliance with the homes policies and takes immediate action to address any issues (NMS 21.2)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. This particular applies to staff files and staff supervision records. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people are encouraged to develop a positive self-view in this environment. Difference is understood and valued and they benefit from the resources and space available to meet their needs. Work in partnership with parents informs staff of children and young people's likes and dislikes, and routines; this then contributes to their care being a positive experience. Staff attention to individual support and communication needs also allows children and young people to enjoy their time in this home. One parent whose son attends for short breaks commented 'the staff are great, and I always get a positive reaction from him when he realises he is coming here.'

Children and young people attend full time education to support their learning, and work in partnership with other specialist agency maximises their achievements. The home is well-equipped to provide an extensive range of stimulating, calming and enjoyable activities in the home. This includes those involving sensory orientation and physical activity, alongside opportunities for social interaction with peers. Parents report that children and young people enjoy spending time in the home. One commented that her daughter 'enjoys the noise and other children being around.'

Children and young people contribute to daily life at the home; the care provided is led by their needs and the choices they make. Their art work and pictures are displayed, and those who live in the home significantly influenced the personalisation of their bedrooms. This practice contributes to children and young people feeling valued and has potential to raise self-esteem and confidence. They appear happy in the home and I observed several occasions when they were laughing and giggling when interacting with staff.

All children and young people have development targets and benefit from specific attention to these by the staff on duty. Some progress for children is evident, including developments in the use of communication skills and improvements in making choices. Some make small but important steps such as being able to sit at a table with others or drink from a cup. Where possible, children and young people are involved in developing more complex life skills such as attention to personal hygiene, and practical skills such as food preparation. This also promotes their independence and enhances their ability.

Access to community activity enriches children and young people's experiences and opportunities. For example they have recently been seeking out an exhibition of Dragons in various locations out in the community and are creating a large Dragon mural back at the home.

Progress and targets for children and young people are regularly reviewed and the

home can demonstrate the difference it makes to their lives.

Quality of care

good

Multi-agency care planning ensures that the care provided meets the aims and objectives expected by parents and the placing authority. Prior to admission, senior staff gather information from a variety of sources to inform planning. This includes visiting young people in their homes, talking to parents and observation during initial visits to the home. Consequently, children and young people's particular vulnerabilities, likes and dislikes are known to staff and successful behaviour management techniques are shared. This attention to providing familiarity and understanding promotes feelings of safety and security, reducing some anxiety for young people when they stay in the home.

Several professional stakeholders' report that children and young people benefit from the care provided. They feel that 'care planning is detailed' and the 'staff are skilled in understanding the needs of children and young people and are able to engage them to support their development.' A social worker commented that the 'whole culture is child focussed.'

Alongside the provision of regular routine preventative health care (facilitated by parents for those using the short breaks service), children and young people are also provided with specialist, help and support services. Amongst those commonly consulted are speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and education providers. Consequently, young people have access to the services they need to promote their emotional development and physical health. The arrangements for the storage and administration of medicines are safe and effective.

Most children and young people have complex communication needs. The staff use a variety of methods to encourage choice and understanding, including signing and the use of picture symbols. They encourage children and young people using praise, telling those who struggle with interpreting their environment about what's happening around them. Staff monitor responses, picking up verbal and non-verbal clues to help determine children and young people's needs and emotional state.

The home provides a large spacious environment, where children and young people including those using wheelchairs and walking aids can move about with ease. Facilities on the site include a games room, sensory room and soft play area with a large ball pit. The home does not have suitable shower facilities for all children and young people, lacking an enclosed shower cubicle or overhead shower. In addition some of the upstairs areas of the home are not personalised or furnished to give a homely feel.

Children and young people make good use of the outside space which has hard standing areas for barbecues and paddling pools, large grasses areas, a sensory surfaced path for wheelchairs and sensory gardens. Some of these areas and paths are in danger of becoming overgrown with weeds and several fruit cages are deteriorating. This distracts from what is otherwise an impressive outside space.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Care planning identifies risks and protective factors for individuals so that staff know how to keep children and young people safe. A member of staff is allocated to care for each child or young person and then additional support is available from the shift planner and shift leader. Where necessary, and usually two staff support children and young people with personal care to support their safety and security when using specialist equipment. Staffing numbers and the supervision of children and young people protects them from issues of bullying.

Safeguarding training is provided to staff and they are able to recognise the particular vulnerabilities related to children with complex needs. When staff have concerns, they act to protect children and young people and safeguard them from any harm. Most children and young people are not able to talk to an adult if they feel unsafe; however staff are expert at recognising when they become unwell or distressed. The majority also have adults around them who are independent of the home (mostly parents) who would advocate on their behalf.

Risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place to support the safety of children and young people. Early detection systems are fitted throughout the building so that staff can get children and young people out quickly in the event of a fire. Regular testing and servicing ensures electrical and special equipment is safe.

Arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are for the most part complete; all have criminal records checks, proof of identity and references. However not all employment histories are detailed, or clear about the reasons for leaving previous employment. In addition some references require further exploration to ensure robust vetting of staff.

Behaviour is managed well using praise and distraction and encouragement. Physical interventions are used to avoid injury to children, young people and staff. There is confusion about what constitutes interventions which need to be recorded as methods of control, such as guide holds. Consequently the records of these incidents lack sufficient information to enable proper oversight and ensure all physical interventions and restrictive practice is appropriate, could not have been avoided, and protects children and young people.

Children and young people do not go missing from this home. Most do not

understand risk and as such the main front entrance to the home is kept locked, this is on a keypad system and can be unlocked on request, if appropriate. Children and young people can get out into the garden area which is safe.

Leadership and management

adequate

A Registered Manager is in place; she is seconded to work in this home for a twelve month period and has nearly twenty years' experience of work with children and young people, at least five of these in a management role. She holds National Vocational Qualifications in both care and residential care management.

In a short space of time and with the support of the dedicated staff (including team leaders) she has made significant improvements which are recognised and applauded by professional stakeholders, parents and staff alike. The focus for developments has concentrated on improving outcomes for, and the quality of care provided to children and young people. The method of shift change-overs has been reviewed making it a purposeful and informative process. This includes staff carefully planning shifts, discussing emergency plans for any children and young people staying in the home, so that staff immediately know what to do if an emergency situation arises. Development targets are also discussed and staff considered how these can be incorporated into the activities and routines of the child or young person's stay, to promote progress.

A development plan is in place and staff work in close partnership with other agencies to improve the services and resources available to children and young people. Recently the manager has been consulting with an occupational therapist about specialist resource needs, and potential designs of bathrooms. They are considering and deciding together the equipment needed to improve the environment and bathing experiences for children and young people.

Arrangements for dealing with and checking medication have improved, reducing the opportunities for mistakes. Some outdated practice in other areas, particularly around meal times and staff duties and responsibilities has been reviewed and updated to benefit children and young people.

Staff received appropriate mandatory and specialist training to support their roles and responsibilities to children and young people. Regular team meetings are held and provide opportunities for staff to share practice successes and air concerns so that these can be resolved.

Formal supervision for staff is of a mixed quality, and the frequency for some staff does not match the requirements expected within the wider authority. In addition there is no provision for the formal supervision of agency or casual workers. This compromises opportunities for raising concerns, personal development and ensuring

staff are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

While there is still some concern about the quality and content of these records, attention has been paid to a previous requirement and records of restraint are now kept secure and tamperproof.

There is no evidence that these shortfalls are currently impacting on the safety or welfare of children and young people.

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.