

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	17/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC031479
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	London Borough of Southwark
Registered person address	London Borough of Southwark, Play Service, 285 Albany Road, London, London, SE5 0AH

Responsible individual	Kevin McCall
Registered manager	Michael Garrity
Inspector	Seka Graovac

Inspection date	17/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC031479

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- This is a home in which meeting children's needs comes first. Because of this, children and their parents, carers and other professionals value and trust the service.
- This is an enabling service. Children engage in a wide range of social, creative and recreational activities. The good quality care effectively promotes their enjoyment, learning, fulfilment and social integration.
- This is a safe service. The robust procedures and risk management practice, the extensive skills and maturity of the staff-team, open communication and close partnerships with other professionals and parents protect children's welfare and ensure consistently good safeguarding practice.
- This is an effectively and efficiently managed service with clear systems and a firm evidence-base. The meticulously kept records demonstrate collaborative and highly personalised care planning and practice.
- Rigorous monitoring, realistic evaluation and effective staff supervision underpin the home's commitment to the continual improvement of the service. The manager is addressing the weaknesses regarding staff training and the décor of the premises.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- provide a more welcoming physical environment by making sure that it is decorated to a good standard throughout the building. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15 paragraph 3.9)
- expand the range of training opportunities for staff, in line with the needs of children who use the service. This in particular relates to providing staff with training on working with children who have an autistic spectrum disorder. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53 paragraph 10.11)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority service. It provides short breaks for up to five children who have complex learning and/or physical disabilities and challenging behaviours. The breaks are usually provided Monday to Friday or at weekends. The children's respite service shares the building with a similar service for adults. The services are kept separate by locked doors. The garden is shared. One manager is registered for both children's and adults' services. All staff also work across both provisions. The adult service is inspected separately by the Care Quality Commission.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/10/2014	Full	Good
12/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
31/07/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Children receive highly personalised care that fully meets their diverse and often, very complex needs. A comprehensive admission process and careful matching with other children sensitively introduces new children to the service. Working in close partnership with families and other professionals ensures good care planning. Staff understand children very well and are able to provide a safe and nurturing environment for them. Staff place the wellbeing of children at the centre of their practice regardless of the challenges that at times, they present. Because of this, the service has gained appreciation and trust from the children, their parents, carers and other professionals who work with them. Children have ample opportunities to enjoy a wide range of social, creative and recreational activities in the home and in the community. The home offers positive social interactions, toys, games, a large soft-play room and a space to safely roam around, including a large garden. The manager commissions creative workshops to take place in the home. Staff take children out to many places. Without this service, many of these activities might have not been available to the children. Having a wide range of the positive experiences helps children to develop better understanding of the world around them, and to improve their social awareness and confidence. Receiving this service has had a positive impact on their development and on their integration into the community. Through providing informal learning opportunities and working closely with the schools, the service effectively supports children to fulfil their potential. Social workers and parents commented on the positive impact that the service has had on the children and also on their families. The staff in the home talked about working together with the families and supporting a healthy family life as one of the main aims of the service. A parent described the service as a 'life-safer'. Staff carefully observe children and use both verbal and non-verbal communication to effectively ascertain children's views, feelings and wishes. They relate to children with kindness and compassion. As a result, children are less anxious and more able to engage. Staff seek to empower children and to involve them in the decision-making process regarding their care as much as possible. They show great skills at constructively promoting children's rights, dignity, choices, and identity. Sharing positive experiences with trusted adults and other children helps children	

to develop friendships. As many children use this service throughout their childhood, they also develop a sense of belonging. Being able to form relationships with people outside of their families, together with the help that they receive to gain practical independence skills, prepares children well for their transition to adult services. The provision of the adult respite service by the same staff and in the same building means that the local authority supports well the consistency of the service beyond childhood.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Comprehensive risk management practice protects children effectively. Proactive and collaborative planning reduces the risks of harm. Experienced and dedicated staff form trusting relationships with children. They manage challenging behaviours well by providing clear and consistent boundaries in line with the individual care plans and positive handling behavioural plans. The staff agree these plans with the children's parents and schools. This secures a consistent and unified approach across different aspects of children's lives. Children feel secure and receive effective support to manage their behaviours and feelings more safely. Detailed records of physical interventions show that staff use these measures effectively, when they are needed to protect children from harm. Regular reviews and reflection on the practice in relation to the use of behavioural control measures contribute to the effectiveness of the team-approach. Staff also promote children's constructive behaviour by engaging them in various activities. Staff consistently recognise and celebrate children's achievements. As a result, children gain self-esteem and their behaviour improves over time. There have been no incidents of children going missing or being exposed to bullying, child sexual exploitation or radicalisation. The physical environment is kept safe and there have been no significant accidents. The physical environment has been adapted to cater for the needs of children with complex disabilities. In line with the nature of the service as described in its statement of purpose, some physical restrictions and monitoring systems have been put in place. These measures include children not having independent access to the main exit from the building and to the service for adults. Parents sign their child's care plans to confirm that they are in the agreement with the use of the restrictive and monitoring measures to keep their child safe. An example of an appropriate monitoring measure is: at night staff audio-monitor those children who are at risk of having epileptic seizures while being asleep. Staff safeguard children by carefully balancing the needs of individual children for close supervision with	

their rights to enjoy liberty and privacy.

A parent commented that what she particularly appreciated about the service was that although it was very safe, 'it was not a holding place for children; staff really engage them in activities'. The staffing levels are maintained suitably high to ensure that a safe and good quality service is delivered at all times.

Professionals and parents say that they have full confidence in the staff keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. The robust procedures and the maturity of the staff-team, together with the regular training and team-discussions make strong contributions to the good safeguarding practice in the home. Staff also highlight having open communication within the service, with the partner agencies and with children and their families as one of the most significant factors that effectively underpins the safety of children.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The service is effectively and efficiently managed in line with its statement of purpose. A suitably qualified Registered Manager has been in his post since 2014. He has brought to the service a wealth of experience of working with children in different settings. In a relatively short period of time, he has established an improvement culture within the home. While continuing to build on the positive professional relationships, he actively supports improvement by challenging any inefficiencies in the provision in the home and in the local authority's other services and departments. Staff talk positively about their own learning and change, and how this has benefited children. Through regular team meetings, individual supervision meetings and annual appraisals, staff have good opportunities to reflect on, to review and to develop their practice further. They receive comprehensive induction and regular training on a wide range of topics. This helps keep their knowledge and skills up to date. However, despite working regularly with children who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, staff have not received training on this topic, since 2012. The manager has requested this training and is liaising with the training department. The manager has also requested some maintenance work to be done. The environment is safe, but the décor is not kept up to the good standard. This is largely due to the delay in the home moving to a different building. There are still no precise timescales regarding the full refurbishment of this building. Staff in the meantime have continued to do what they can to keep the environment clean and	

to make it more pleasant and homely.

The manager's robust internal scrutiny is complemented with regular monthly monitoring visits to the service by an independent person. The responsible individual visits frequently to provide additional overview, support and direction. The leaders and managers have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. They have identified areas for improvement and are taking appropriate steps to continue to improve. In line with the only requirement from the last inspection, the manager has recorded a risk assessment regarding the location. This document clearly demonstrates that the service is suitably located to enable children's community integration and to reach families with disabled children within the borough.

The meticulous record-keeping underpins the home's high quality evidence-based practice, and ensures consistency, good communication and rigorous monitoring of the outcomes for children.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted. ``````

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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