

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032439
Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Wiltshire Council
Registered person address	Wiltshire Council, Director of Social Services County Hall, Bythesea Road TROWBRIDGE Wiltshire BA14 8LE
Responsible individual	Carolyn Godfrey
Registered manager	Tina Elizabeth Baker
Date of last inspection	10/02/2014

Inspection date	02/05/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is judged as good overall. Young people are making good progress in their social and educational development. Challenging behaviours are significantly reducing for young people during their stays and parents report improvements in their behaviour while at home.

Young people benefit from individualised care which is planned and implemented in collaboration with parents, education and other health professionals. This ensures that children receive consistent and personalised care, delivered by staff members who understand their individual needs, abilities and preferences. They are kept safe by the competent staff team who are vigilant in their supervision and care of young people. Young people have fun and enjoy taking part in a range of stimulating activities. A social worker said, "The home is absolutely wonderful, children are well stimulated and enjoy all of the facilities at the home. The staff work well with families and school to help develop children to the best of their abilities."

One requirement and two recommendations have been made. These are made with regard to improving the physical properties of the premises and garden, ensuring that monitoring records are more detailed, and achieving continuity of staffing.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service offers short breaks for up to eight children at any one time, for young people of either gender who have a severe learning and physical disability and/or complex health needs. This service is provided by a local authority and is available to families from across the county.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
21/06/2013	Full	adequate
27/03/2013	Interim	good progress
30/10/2012	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
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair externally and internally. Specifically, the water damage caused to the internal upper areas of the home are to be repaired in a timely manner, and the condition of the sensory garden needs to be improved (Regulation 31 (2)(d))	30/05/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that visits of the home under Regulation 33 include checks of any disciplinary measures and use of restraint; in particular, ensure that reporting accurately reflects the number of incidents of restraint recorded and whether these incidents are increasing or decreasing (NMS 21.7)
- ensure that the registered person makes every effort to achieve continuity of staffing. Specifically, that staff vacancies are addressed at the earliest opportunity (NMS 17.8)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

There are good communication systems and joint planning between the home, families and the two main schools that the majority of the young people attend. Young people benefit from this collaborative approach to the delivery of their educational development and care. This consistent, focused delivery of care and support helps young people to make sense of their stay and to feel more secure and supports young people in achieving good outcomes while at the home and this positively impacts on other areas of their lives. Young people make good progress both socially and educationally in relation to their starting points. One parent whose son was about to leave the home recently wrote in a letter of commendation, "My son can be a handful and presents challenging behaviour, but his needs have always been met. Every stay has seen him come home calm and relaxed. The home has been a very positive experience for my son. Somewhere he has been respected, progressed and had fun."

Young people's placement plans focus on the development of young people's social skills and improving the quality of their interactions with others. Young people are supported by staff to develop skills in using symbol communication systems and this helps young people to have a method to indicate likes and dislikes about their care arrangements. The home makes great efforts to involve young people in decision-making within the home and this promotes young people's self-esteem and confidence. Young people receive good support and guidance on how to manage their personal care and this again promotes their dignity and self-esteem.

Young people are encouraged by staff to participate in a range of life experiences. These include such things as food preparation programmes and in helping with household tasks. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and to take responsibility for their personal care. This helps young people to develop degrees of independence and self confidence. For one young person with an eating disorder the home works well with supportive agencies and medical professionals to establish a clear plan of assistance. The home takes care to share this plan with all agencies that this young person is involved with. The home uses every opportunity to engage young people in external activities and community events. The range of stimulating activities provided for young people, contribute to broadening their life experiences. These opportunities support young people's enjoyment of life and to increase their inclusion in the community.

Quality of care **good**

The home works collaboratively with placing social workers from the child health and disabilities team and other health professionals to prepare and implement care plans and to ensure that children receive the support they need whilst at the home. Additionally, the home actively communicates with, and provides high level support to parents to ensure that the methods of care are mirrored at home, thereby giving children a consistent and secure approach to their care. Parents appreciate the high quality of care given to their children. One parent commented, "My son couldn't be happier there, I know he is in good hands and with people who care about him." The service promotes young people's development which enhances and supports family life. Their progress contributes to maintaining young people's relationships with their families and being cared for by them. Another parent commented, 'My son has made remarkable progress at the home and because of this he is happier at home now also.'

Young people enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities both within and outside of the home. Within the house there are a range of leisure and sensory resources to stimulate young people. These include a sensory room, ball pool and a hot tub. There are numerous computers and new technology resources that the young people enjoy. The home organises a varied activities programme and this includes trips out to the wider community. The home's has extensive outside play areas and external play equipment. Unfortunately, the sensory garden is now overgrown with nettles and the garden's play huts have fallen into disrepair and no longer provide a restful and stimulating resource for young people.

Care programmes for young people are comprehensive and individualised and each young person has a key worker who has a good knowledge of their programme. The key worker has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the progress of the programme. This includes promoting good communication with social workers and maintaining good working relationships with schools. Young people are supported by staff and their families in working together to promote high levels of school attendance. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff who make efforts to support young people in making progress in every aspect of their lives.

Four members of the staff team have left the home since the last inspection and cover arrangements have been provided by some staff choosing to work extra hours and by the use of bank staff. There has been some delay in the Human Resources Department of the council in recruiting and appointing new staff. There has also been high levels of staff sickness in recent months. This means that young people may not be looked after by staff that they recognise and who know them well. However, no agency staff are used and most of the bank staff have worked at the home for several years.

Clear health plans and health and medication strategies promote young people's good health. Staff complete training in first aid and in the administration of medication which ensures young people receive the daily health support they require to maintain their well-being. Young people enjoy eating the nutritional and well

cooked meals that meet their particular dietary requirements.

There is currently a redecoration and refurbishment programme underway which is contributing to providing a brighter and more child-focused environment. Although the home generally provides a good standard of accommodation and sufficient resources that help make young people feel comfortable during their stays the upper area of the house suffered from a roof leak two months ago and there is severe damage to the walls and ceiling which has not been addressed by the maintenance department of the council and this area of the home does not provide a pleasant living environment for young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Staff are well trained in safeguarding policies and procedures and demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding issues. The management work closely with the Local Authority Designated Officer and Local Safeguarding Children Board in ensuring that management and staff awareness and skills are kept up to date. Young people do not go missing from this home. Young people's well-being is the priority concern of the staff at all times. Regular staff meetings discuss how best to care for young people and this helps to keep them safe. Staff recognise young people's individual triggers and vulnerabilities and there are clearly written risk assessments in place which provide excellent guidance for staff in keeping children safe. The home also undertake risk assessments on all children's activities. There are clearly written risk assessments in place for day trips out and for all external and internal activities and these are robustly adhered to. These are regularly reviewed and updated on at least an annual basis. This proactive and sensitive support helps to protect young people.

The home has a clear behaviour management strategy which is understood and implemented effectively by the staff team. The home works collaboratively with a behaviour analyst, employing similar techniques, resources and strategies to those used in schools. This helps to ensure that young people benefit from a consistent approach to their welfare. The frequency of some children's challenging behaviour means that staff have to be vigilant in ensuring children are kept safe and there are effective strategies in place to keep children safe. All staff are trained in the 'team teach' method of restraint and the home has two trained trainers who ensure that staff skills in this area of work are regularly updated. All incidents of restraints and sanctions given are accurately and clearly recorded and reflected upon. This reduces the likelihood that they will re-occur. This means that monitoring processes can be effective and this potentially improves the safeguarding of young people. However, it was noted that monitoring visit reports do not include the number of incidents where physical restraint has been used, as was recommended by the previous inspection. Children and families receive clear guidance on how to make representations and complaints and there are systems in place to record these. No complaints have been received from the home since the time of the last inspection.

Regular fire, utilities and services safety checks are carried out to ensure young people and staff live and work in a safe environment. Regular fire evacuation drills take place. The home has drawn up a clearly written emergency evacuation plan for the home. Personal evacuation plans for each young person are in place to show how best to support individuals in an emergency. Specialist equipment is available in the home to aid the effective evacuation of the building for young people with disabilities.

Staff recruitment and selection processes are robust. The necessary vetting processes are completed to check that new employees are suitable to work with young people. Any staff, contractors and visitors coming to the home are not allowed unsupervised access to children. This helps to ensure that children are kept safe from potential abuse.

Leadership and management

good

All of the requirements, and all but one of the recommendations for improvement which were made at the previous inspection have been implemented. The home has produced a detailed and comprehensive children's guide which contains all necessary information and which is written in a format that children without reading skills can understand. The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and now accurately details the aims and objectives of the home and the resources available. This means that children and stakeholders have full and up to date information about the home and know where they can get help or make representation.

There is now an appropriate system in place for recording incidents of physical restraint. However, although the monthly monitoring visit reports provide a detailed audit of the majority of the service provision and provide good guidance for management and staff, they are still not recording the number of restraints occurring each month and this does not assist the monitoring and audit of systems of keeping children safe.

There are now effective processes in place to allow consultation with key stakeholders and engage them in service development and these consultations have been included in the home's reviews of the quality of care and these help to guide service improvement. The reviews are child focussed, detailed and concise and clearly identify the areas in which the home plans to make service improvements. The home has a system in place to ensure that the regulatory body are notified about any events listed in Schedule 5. The deputy manager stated that no such events have occurred since the time of the last inspection.

Along with an extensive training programme for staff in all of the core skill areas of their role, there is now a comprehensive induction programme in place for newly appointed staff which is closely linked the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards. The majority of care staff have the relevant training award for their role, or are undertaking this award. Several members of the care staff

have additional professional qualifications appropriate to working with children with disabilities. Staff say that there is regular supervision and effective management support and that all staff and management conduct an annual performance appraisal which identifies their training and development needs. This means that children are looked after by staff who are well trained and managed. The Registered Manager has appropriate professional and management qualifications and was on annual leave at the time of this unannounced inspection. The inspection was conducted with the deputy manager who demonstrated a good awareness of the strengths of the home and areas for improvement within the service. This knowledge is reflected within the home's development plan.

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.