

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032565
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Stoke on Trent City Council
Registered person address	City of Stoke-on-Trent, Civic Centre Glebe Street STOKE-ON-TRENT ST4 1HH
Responsible individual	Susan Hammersley
Registered manager	Robert Henry Snape
Date of last inspection	26/08/2014

Inspection date	01/03/2015
Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

This home was last inspected in August 2014 and was judged to be good. One requirement and three recommendations were made at that time. The Registered Manager has taken appropriate action to meet these shortfalls. As a result, the service given to young people has improved.

Regular visits to the home are now undertaken by an independent person. This means that parents, carers and placing social workers are reassured that there is appropriate external oversight and audit of the home. A further improvement from the last inspection is that the visitor now regularly consults with parents and carers. As a result, the Registered Manager is able to review the service given and act on any recommendations for improvement.

The organisation has arranged for specific safeguarding training that focuses on learning disabilities. This was recommended at the last inspection and has been appropriately actioned. Similarly, the recommendation regarding improving recording in young people's files is also met. A new system is now in place where the progress of young people is carefully measured and clearly recorded. This means that young people, their parents, carers and social workers are clear about the impact of the service on their child's development. For example, young people are supported in achieving a series of independence skills such as making their bed, helping prepare food and dressing independently. Detailed recording of progress is made in an easily accessible format. The staff team also use this information to update care and placement plans. As a result, young people receive care that recognises their progress and continues to develop their skills. Furthermore, young people are able, should they wish, to review their progress in these records.

Young people are encouraged to display positive behaviour and as a result, the

home has a harmonious atmosphere. Rewards for positive behaviour are age-appropriate; for example, children are given colourful stickers and their achievements are celebrated. Restraint is seldom used in the home. Since the last inspection, there has been one use of physical intervention. This was used appropriately and for the purposes of keeping children safe. The Registered Manager ensured that detailed recording fully documented the incident and all relevant parties were fully informed.

The views of young people are regularly sought as part of developing the service in the home. Regular meetings with young people ensure that areas for improvement are discussed and addressed. The Registered Manager ensures that appropriate review is conducted of consultation and uses this information to further drive improvement. For example, young people have recently consulted about décor choices for bedrooms. Young people are able to see that their opinions are heard and translated into changes in the home.

Parents value the service and recognise the progress that their children make. Excellent communication between the staff and parents ensures that all relevant information is shared and concerns appropriately responded to. Comments from parents are highly complementary and include; 'it's absolutely amazing', 'the staff are really responsive to the needs of my child', 'we're happy to put our trust in them' and 'my child is making a lot of progress.' An enthusiastic, stable and highly experienced staff team provide excellent care to young people at all times. A parent commented that, 'the staff are really responsive to the needs of my child.'

Young people are encouraged to develop their social skills and tolerance of their peers. Mealtimes are a social occasion where young people are encouraged to sit together and share their experiences. This results in a home where young people are encouraged to develop their skills in interaction. Young people are encouraged to develop their independence and self-help skills. For example, young people are encouraged, where able to do so, to complete laundry tasks and help with preparing food. A parent commented that, 'my child has really blossomed in the last six months.'

The home is spacious and well equipped. Young people are able to explore their surroundings and make good use of a large outside area, sensory and communal rooms. This ensures that young people are able to spend time alone and also with their peers. The staff team are vigilant to the varying needs of young people.

The environment is safely maintained. Regular checks on all equipment, including specialist mobility equipment, ensure that young people are kept safe. Fire safety is actively promoted and young people take part in regular fire drills. However, these drills take place in daylight hours. Young people may not be practised or familiar in evacuating the home in darkness. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice.

As a result of this inspection, one recommendation has been made to further improve practice.

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority. The home offers short break care for children and young people with severe learning and/or physical disabilities and is registered to accommodate up to six young people at any one time. The service is generally only open at weekends but opens occasionally during the week in school holidays.

At the time of this inspection the service provides short breaks for 21 young people, on a rotating basis, with a further three undergoing the home's assessment/induction process.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/08/2014	Full	good
10/02/2014	Interim	good progress
21/08/2013	Full	good
02/02/2013	Interim	good progress

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that there is an emergency escape plan that all staff and children are familiar with and have practiced so they know what to do in an emergency. (NMS 10.9)

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.