

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033127
Inspection date	23 March 2010
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	25 August 2009
--------------------------------	----------------

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is part of the children's disability service offering care for children aged between five and 17 years with learning disabilities and physical disabilities.

The property is purpose built on one level and provides accommodation for seven children receiving respite services. Longer-term care can be offered to three young people within an attached bungalow, which is self-contained.

The home is well equipped, offering very good facilities for young people. Externally there are three separate and well-equipped play areas.

The home is situated near a town centre and public transport is accessible.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the progress the home has made with the requirements and recommendations made at the last inspection undertaken on 25/08/2009. These related to improvements to placement and transition plans for young people, educational needs, the Statement of Purpose and training for staff. Being healthy and economic wellbeing were not looked at during this inspection. The home has taken appropriate action to address the actions and recommendations made. There are excellent systems in place for promoting safe working practice and children's dignity is exceptionally well promoted. Children enjoy their time in the home and can make a positive contribution because staff know the children they care for, listen well and are empowering.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection two requirements and six recommendations were made. The requirements were in relation to placement plans and the Statement of Purpose. Placement plans for each young person have been reviewed and contain information that clearly reflects the placing authority placement plan. This ensures that the home provides continuity of care for the young people. The Statement of Purpose has been updated following the last inspection and reflects the services that the home provides. This ensures that parents, carers and staff have a good understanding of the home and facilities available.

The recommendations made were in relation to placement plans, education, planning for young people preparing for leaving care, staff training and action undertaken in response to Children's Rights Officer visits. Placement plans have been reviewed for each young person and contain greater detail with regards cultural, religious and racial needs. This ensures that all individual needs have been identified and how the home will assist in meeting those needs for the young people. Transition plans are in place for the young people preparing to leave care. These are comprehensive and contain a clear plan and overview of how young people will be supported. These plans have been undertaken in consultation with the young person, parents, placing authority and, where appropriate, independent advocates. Training for staff continues to be undertaken and the home has good links with health care professionals to provide additional support and training. Just over 50% of staff have completed National Vocational Qualification

level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People. This training is ongoing for staff to enable the home to achieve 80% of staff holding this qualification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The privacy and dignity of the children and young people at the home is promoted at all times. Each young person has their own room and staff enable young people to have time on their own, balanced with individual risk. Staff work in a sensitive manner when carrying out personal care tasks and the promotion of dignity is at the forefront of practice.

Children and young people are effectively safeguarded. This is because staff have the necessary skills, training and experience to promote child protection and follow best practice guidance in relation to this. The home effectively manages bullying by ensuring that young people are supported to understand the different aspects of what constitutes bullying. Clear information regarding bullying is available to the young people in a number of formats, including pictorial. Staff are vigilant to non verbal communication that could indicate these issues.

Staff are well trained in managing challenging or unsafe behaviours. They are knowledgeable about individual risk because detailed information is provided prior to placement and strategies are devised and fully implemented. This encourages a consistent approach. Staff are fair and measured in their approach and challenge inappropriate behaviours, such as bullying. Behaviour management is effectively and rigorously monitored by senior staff. The risk of children going missing is significantly reduced because of the very good levels of staff supervision.

Appropriate fire risk assessments and testing of fire equipment is in place to ensure that the safety of young people is maintained. Clear information is provided in different formats for the children regarding the procedures to follow.

The risk to children and young people of being exposed to potential abusers is reduced because staff are safely recruited and visitors to the home effectively monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children and young people are offered high levels of individual support to meet their complex needs. Needs arising out of any disability are well met by staff. Staff know the children they care for well because they spend one to one time with them and monitor their development. The home has further developed individual assessments to reflect the cultural needs of individuals to enable them to have these needs effectively met within the home.

The home supports and promotes the educational needs of the young people. Good links with education have been developed and staff attend school reviews. Staff have received guidance in promoting the educational needs of all the young people and this is clearly reflected within individual placement plans. The home has a range of facilities to support education. These include computers, arts and craft materials and games. These support the children and young people's further development effectively.

The home has a range of leisure facilities in place. These include toys, books and outdoor play equipment. In addition, the home uses community resources to enable young people to have a range of leisure activities. Individual interests, likes and dislikes of young people are recorded within their placement plans. This enables the home to effectively plan leisure activities with young people that they like and wish to participate in.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The placement plans for the children and young people clearly identify their individual needs and how these are met whilst at the home. The format of the plans has been adapted to enable these plans to be completed in conjunction with the young people. The home also works in conjunction with parents to enable a comprehensive placement plan to reflect individual needs. Staff have a good understanding of placement plans and the implementation of them. Plans are kept under review and amended to reflect changing needs of individual young people. The home also produces comprehensive reports to link in with formal reviews. Reviews are timely, which ensures that children's changing needs are promptly identified and met.

There are clear processes in relation to admissions. The admission criteria are clear and well managed and children are appropriately placed. This reduces the risk of a placement breaking down and promotes confidence that the needs of the children placed can be met.

Staff communicate effectively with children and young people using their preferred method of communication. This enables children to contribute to life in the home. There are a variety of forums available to encourage children's participation including one to one work, children's rights meetings and accessible information and advice. This practice promotes self-confidence and shows children that they are valued. Some young people have been involved in the recent development of a Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) about the home and what they like about staying there.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a clear Statement of Purpose in place. This document outlines the aims and objectives of the home. This document is kept under review and clearly reflects any changes made. The Statement of Purpose is available to parents, placing social workers and staff. A clear children's guide is in place, which is in a format that children can understand and some positive work has been undertaken to ensure that children understand their rights.

Staffing levels at the home are appropriate to meet the needs of the children and young people. Training is given a high priority and staff have access to a comprehensive training programme. National Vocational Qualification training in the Care of Children and Young People is ongoing with over 50% of staff having achieved this. Those who have not completed this are either currently undertaking the training or planned to commence in the near future. Staff receive good levels of support from the manager and seniors at the home. This enables them to provide positive levels of care to the children and young people.

Individual files for children and young people are comprehensive and maintained to a good standard.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure 80% of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in The Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29.5).