

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035247
Inspector	Colin Imrie
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Durham County Council
Registered person address	County Hall DURHAM DH1 5UL

Responsible individual	Karen Monica Robb
Registered manager	Helen Andrews
Date of last inspection	07/10/2014

Inspection date	05/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

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

Children and young people continue to receive a very good service at the home. They make progress with their goals and targets, increase their independence skills and enjoy a wide range of activities. Young people have made progress with their personal skills, such as washing and dressing. Others made progress with socialising and making friends. In addition, young people were gaining confidence from taking part in activities. One young person had been given buddy responsibilities and was enjoying it. This was helping increase her self-confidence. Another young person was being helped to get used to his new electric wheelchair, helping his mobility and independence.

Children and young people are able to take part in a wide range of activities both in the home and outside. Inside there is a soft play area and a sensory room, which are used and enjoyed, as well as plenty of games and appropriate toys. Outside the large garden has a range of outdoor toys including some go-karts. Children and young people recently experience a professional basketball match. Those that attended really enjoyed it and staff are planning similar trips. Staff were able to see that even quieter young people enjoyed the noise and excitement of the basketball and became much more animated and excited. This further develops their social skills and encourages them to have new experiences in different environments. One particularly striking development is that children and young people take part in various fundraising activities for other outside charities, such as The Dogs Trust and Macmillan. This not only raises money but gives the children and young people a real sense of achievement and a pride in helping others. The manager and staff have a desire for the children and young people to achieve and actively look for new and varied activities for them to participate in. They celebrate activities and achievement with certificates and have a wall of photos which acts as a visual reminder of what they have accomplished.

The children and young people's health is given a high priority. There are robust systems around the administration of medication and there is a high emphasis placed on staff completing medical training to manage the significant and complex health needs.

Children and young people are kept very safe. No one has gone missing, no bullying has been recorded and no child protection incidents have been recorded. Staff infrequently use restraints and sanctions to manage behaviour, preferring to use their good relationships and communication skills to encourage positive behaviour.

The staff team is very experienced and has staff with a range of backgrounds from social work to nursing, this is a real strength of the home. Equally, the manager is longstanding and has extensive experience and knowledge. The Statement of Purpose says clearly that recruitment is important because they only want the 'right staff'. This was demonstrated when in a recent attempt to recruit a cleaner no applicants were found to be suitable and the post was re-advertised. The staff team clearly enjoy their work and relate well to the children and young people.

The recording systems are very good. Information is detailed but concise and the level of detail which goes into planning demonstrates real care. The daily living plans are particularly well written. There is good evidence of key-working and regular consultation with the children and young people. In addition, there is also good evidence of consultation with parents and carers. Staff are reviewing the use of the recording system to improve its effectiveness in recording outcomes.

The manager offers strong leadership and supports the staff team well. Good training and supervision are in place and the manager monitors the work thoroughly. The manager has completed the requirement and the recommendation from the previous inspection. The statement of purpose has been revised and supervision is taking place regularly with all staff. The manager is forward-thinking and has development plans in place for various parts of the home. There is good evidence in place that the staff work well with other professionals from schools and medical services. The manager is keen to develop a greater partnership with them to develop what she describes as a 'wrap-around service' for each child and young person. The manager is pro-active in working with fundraisers to raise money for new equipment and resources.

There are two recommendations made at this inspection. One concerns an incident of challenging behaviour which was dealt with by escorting the young person to their bedroom and keeping them there for a short period of time. This could have been managed better and the manager will review this incident and plan for possible future incidents. The other concerns the written plan around the administration of epilepsy medication on one young person's file. This was not clear enough and could cause a delay in the young person taking medicine.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short-break care and accommodation for seven children with learning and physical disabilities, from nine years and up to 17 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/10/2014	Full	good
23/12/2013	Interim	good progress
16/07/2013	Full	good
03/12/2012	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 the home regularly reviews incidents of challenging behaviour, examines trends or issues emerging from this, to enable staff to reflect and learn to inform future practice. NMS 3.21
- Ensure that staff receive guidance and training to provide appropriate care if looking after children with complex health needs. Specifically guidance around the administration of medication for epilepsy. NMS 6.8

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.