

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	1 September 2009
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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 owned and managed by a charitable organisation. It is registered to provide both short breaks and longer term care to children and young people with complex disabilities and sensory impairment, who are aged from seven years to 17 years. The home forms part of a school campus. The school is inspected separately by Ofsted.

Young people are accommodated in three houses. Each house has a bathroom, kitchen, dining area and lounge. Young people have individual bedrooms. The school and home are set in several acres of land which provides opportunities for play and other activities. On-site facilities include an adapted swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms and sports facilities. A multi-disciplinary team of health professionals work at the school and home. The team include speech and language specialists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, audiologists, paediatric and psychiatric services.

The amount of time that the young people are accommodated at the home varies, with some of the young people accommodated for 52 weeks a year, others for one night per week and others at weekends or during term time only.

There were 12 young people present in different houses at the time of this inspection.

Summary

This unannounced full inspection was undertaken to consider all the outcome areas. It was completed in conjunction with an inspection of the school, for which a separate report is available.

The standard of care in the home is excellent. Comprehensive assessments and detailed care plans enable staff to make sure that young people's needs are identified and met. Communication between care, health and education staff is excellent, so that care is consistent across the service and young people make steady progress. Young people's good health is promoted because staff are knowledgeable about complex needs and have ready access to support from a number of different health professionals. Care and teaching staff work very well together to support the education and overall development of young people.

Safeguarding young people is a high priority in the service. There are excellent care practices which are underpinned by highly effective policies and procedures, which ensure that young people are cared for safely and in a way that promotes their personal dignity.

The home is effectively managed with well-established systems in place for monitoring and reviewing practice. This promotes positive outcomes for young people. Staff are enthusiastic, competent, well trained and qualified for their work. They have a very positive view of the young people they look after and strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for them.

Areas of improvement identified during this visit relate to two areas of record keeping.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff manage young people's individual and complex health needs exceptionally well. Care staff are well trained and work very well with the range of health professionals employed within the service. Each young person has a detailed health action plan which is developed from a comprehensive health needs assessment. Health plans enable staff across the service to understand the specific support each young person requires to ensure that their good health is promoted. Young people have ready access to a range of professional services within the setting, for example, speech and language therapist, audiologist, paediatrician, psychiatrist and a learning disability nurse. Communication between staff from all disciplines and parents is extremely good, so that information about young people is kept up to date and accurate.

Young people's dietary needs are well catered for. They are provided with a diet that is nutritious and are encouraged to try different foods and to help to choose the meals they want to eat. Staff are able to seek the advice of a dietician to support their work with young people and have very good information about those specific needs of young people that impact upon their diet, for example in relation to their culture or religion, food intolerances and allergies. Staff make meal times pleasant social occasions. When there is a specific issue in relation to a young person's diet or health, staff keep clear records of the meals they have eaten. This system is not in place for every young person to enable staff to monitor their diet. Staff are trained in specific areas of care such as gastric tube feeding and manage this sensitively.

Robust medication procedures protect young people. All medication is received into the service by trained staff who work in the health centre. They control the medication that is taken to the individual houses, where it is kept and administered by senior care staff who are also trained. Staff from the health centre have oversight of all medical records, which are returned to the health centre every morning when young people go across to the school. Records are monitored by the health centre staff and the head of care, who is a registered nurse. All staff in the home are trained in the delivery of first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are cared for safely because staff are well trained and have an excellent understanding of the individual needs of young people and of the caring task. Staff are sensitive to the need to promote the personal dignity of young people. They achieve a good balance between keeping young people safe and respecting their privacy when they carry out personal care tasks. There are clear boundaries which promote safe working practice.

The arrangements for managing complaints and child protection issues are very effective. Staff demonstrate a genuine interest in seeking the views of the young people they look after and represent young people well. They have an excellent knowledge of the different ways in which young people communicate, so that they understand how they express their dissatisfactions. Staff take prompt action to respond to concerns that are identified. The organisation's policy on safeguarding children and young people is robust and there are established links with the

representative of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff undertake training in child protection issues during their induction and the manager makes sure that this training is regularly updated. Staff have an excellent understanding of the organisation's procedures and of their own responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children.

There is clear evidence that bullying is not an issue in the service. Individual risk assessments enable staff to put in place appropriate support plans and staffing levels are very good, so young people are well supervised and protected from bullying. These systems are equally effective in protecting young people from going missing from the home.

Individual risk assessments, clear behaviour support plans and excellent communication systems, enable staff to work consistently across the care and education teams, to encourage young people to behave in ways that are socially acceptable. Staff recognise and praise positive behaviour and intervene at an early stage to distract young people and defuse difficult situations, if a young person's behaviour becomes unacceptable or challenging. Staff are trained to respond positively to difficult behaviour, including the use of physical restraints. There is clear evidence that restraint is only ever used as a last resort and at the lowest level of intervention necessary to protect the individual young person or other young people and staff.

Young people live in a safe and well-managed environment. There is a robust system for undertaking checks on equipment and the environment, and a dedicated maintenance team makes sure that the buildings and campus generally are kept safe. Staff are trained, each young person has a personal evacuation plan, which is specific to their needs and there are regular evacuation drills. These systems ensure that staff know how to help young people to safety in an emergency.

Stringent checks are undertaken on all new staff before they start to work at the home or school, to ensure that they are safe to work with children and young people. The service has put in place a robust security system to ensure that all visitors to the site are checked. All staff have identity badges and visitors are also provided with an identity badge that includes their photograph. Staff challenge any individual they see on the site who does not have such a badge. This is excellent practice. Buildings across the campus are kept secure to prevent unauthorised access, which further protects vulnerable young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given an excellent level of individual support. A thorough assessment of their needs is undertaken before they come to the service. This involves their families and other professionals who work at the service, to ensure that it is comprehensive. Detailed person-centred plans enable staff to make sure that young people's assessed needs are being met. Young people have an identified key worker who takes responsibility for making sure that plans are implemented, but all staff take equal responsibility for caring for young people. Young people also have access to different health professionals who work in the organisation, so that they receive any additional support they need.

Care and teaching staff work very well together to support the education of young people and help them to achieve their individual potential. Education programmes are personalised, so young people work to their own specific targets. Regular liaison meetings and exchange of information between care and education staff ensure that communication across the service

is excellent. Care staff have a good understanding of the work that young people are doing and of how they can support them to achieve their targets. They have a very positive view of the young people they look after and celebrate all their achievements.

The service gives young people the opportunity to be involved in a wide range of activities that they enjoy, both on and off site. Examples of these include youth club, swimming, bowling, art club, cycling, walking and visits to local leisure facilities. Involvement in these activities helps young people to enjoy their leisure time and supports their emotional and physical development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is a strong emphasis in the service on care planning and reviewing. The care that young people need is detailed in their person-centred plan, which is clear and focused. These plans are underpinned by rigorous individual risk assessments. Care plans are discussed in multidisciplinary meetings to ensure that care and education staff are well informed about meeting young people's needs and that there is consistency in the care they are given. Plans are closely monitored and the progress of young people is reviewed within the service and through statutory reviewing processes.

Staff work in partnership with parents, young people and other professionals to ensure that all admissions to the home and the school are carefully planned. Senior staff make sure that detailed information about a young person is available to them prior to their admission to the home. This enables the service to be clear that they can meet the young person's needs. The manager stated that the needs of all the young people already in the home are also considered as part of the admission process. However, there is no written evidence to confirm this. Staff are sensitive to the need to help young people move on from the service in as planned a way as possible, so that they and their families are well supported during the transition process.

The service is proactive in helping children and young people keep in touch with their families and other people outside the home who are important to them. They make facilities such as video links and a web camera available so that young people can see their families. There is a family flat on the campus which parents and other family members can use when they come to visit their child. This is an excellent resource.

Young people's views are actively sought and they are represented well by staff, who have a very good understanding of how each individual young person communicates, if they do not use speech. Staff also keep in close contact with parents to keep them informed about the care and welfare of their child and to enable them to have an opportunity to make their own views known.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to develop life skills, to make choices and to be as independent as they can be. Care and support plans enable staff to be clear about the work that is being done with young people to help them reach their specific targets and encourage their independence. Staff ensure that transition plans are in place for young people at an appropriate stage and they work closely with young people, their family and professionals to support young people when they move on to other services.

Young people benefit from living in an environment which is kept safe, comfortably furnished and well maintained. Facilities in the different houses are appropriate to the specific needs of the young people who live there. For example, one of the houses has a lift and kitchen and bathroom facilities that have been adapted to suit young people who use wheelchairs. Young people have individual bedrooms, which they are encouraged to personalise. Bathrooms provide young people with appropriate privacy. The service has a dedicated maintenance team and repairs are attended to promptly. The grounds of the home and school provide young people with opportunities for play and activities.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The service has a clear Statement of Purpose that accurately describes how the home cares for young people. The young person's guide is a colourful document that describes the home in pictures, symbols and simple language. The service also provides a DVD for young people, so that they are given good information about the home in a format that is appropriate to their needs.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent team of staff who are known to them and who are experienced, qualified and well trained to understand and meet their complex physical and emotional needs. The home is very well staffed and staff receive very good support from managers. Communication is a strength of the service and promotes consistency of care for young people and enables them to achieve positive outcomes.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the principles and are committed to promoting the values within the setting. They are well trained to understand the complex needs of the young people they look after, which enables them to provide care to young people which is individualised and meets their specific needs. Young people are helped to learn about other cultures and to be involved in their local community.

Highly effective management systems ensure that the care that is given to young people is monitored, so that excellent standards are maintained in the home. Staff are supervised and the manager makes regular checks on records in the home. Independent visitors also do monthly checks on the care and welfare of young people and provide clear reports of their findings. There is evidence that prompt action is taken to resolve any issues that are identified.

Every young person has an individual file which contains detailed information about them. Information from other records is appropriately cross-referenced into young people's files, so that there is a permanent and separate record of their stay in the service. These files are well managed and are stored securely, to protect the young person's right to confidentiality.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- keep records for all young people of meals eaten (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that written records of decisions that are made about admissions include information on the likely effect of the admission upon the existing group of young people. (NMS 5.8)