

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035954
Inspector	Elaine Allison
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Metropolitan Borough of Wirral
Registered person address	Metropolitan Borough of Wirral, Education Department Hamilton Building, Conway Street BIRKENHEAD Merseyside CH41 4FD
Responsible individual	Simon Fisher
Registered manager	Debra Elizabeth Edwards
Date of last inspection	28/03/2014

Inspection date	18/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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This short-break home provides a high quality of care that produces outstanding outcomes for young people and their families across all areas of their lives. Young people and staff have excellent relationships. Parents say 'he comes back much calmer and this helps our entire family to function'. Young people enjoy their stays at the home and receive outstanding levels of support for them and their families. This helps them become healthier, learn new skills and develop better relationships with their families and the wider community. Parents have complete confidence in the care provided by the home. For example, one said 'it is somewhere where I have one hundred percent trust and faith that my son is safe and happy when he is there'.

Care planning is individualised and ensures that the care provided supports young people and their families. This means that young people make progress at the home that is then transferred to other areas of their lives. This helps young people to develop and sustain new abilities which significantly improve their quality of life.

Young people's views and those of their family members are central to the care provided. This means that young people develop in the way they wish and are empowered to take a greater role in any decisions made about them. They take part in a wide and creative range of activities and undertake projects which enable them

to contribute to their local community. Young people are safe; there is no bullying and a good staffing ratio ensures that young people's individual needs are well met.

The home is decorated and furnished to a very good standard and has all the equipment and resources to allow children to have a comfortable, safe and enjoyable stay. Young people's care plans include an assessment of any risks they may face but these are not identified and addressed as specifically as they should be.

The leadership and management of the home is of outstanding quality. Managers monitor the home's operation and quality of care closely to ensure it remains at a high standard. Support and training for staff is of a very high quality and this further underpins the high quality care. Leadership within the home is creative and inspirational; this has enabled significant developments to take place which continue to improve the homes service to children and their families.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service provides short-term breaks for eight young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities. In addition, one child is able to live at the home. The home is owned and managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2014	Interim	good progress
27/06/2013	Full	good
18/02/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
27/11/2012	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make excellent progress as a result of the care and support they receive from this home. This progress extends across their wider lives away from the home. This is partly a consequence of the quality of care provided while they are at the home but also because the home continues to work with young people and their families in between their stays. For example, a parent commented 'this is a brilliant place it has been an alternative to fostering for us and it's so much better that we are still together but both get some space and respite'.

Young people learn to manage their own behaviour and develop their self-confidence and esteem. They develop new skills and improve their abilities which help them enjoy their lives more. For example, one young person's eating routine at home is improving because of the way care is provided while she is staying for short breaks. A parent said their child has "managed to now come out and eat with the rest of the family in restaurants and this is a huge achievement".

Children and young people's health is very well supported, maintained and improved. They have access to any primary or specialist health care and treatment they may need and the home ensures that access to these is consistent and supports young people's ability to remain living with their families.

Young people eat healthily and enjoy a wide range of positive activities which promote their good health and are able to learn to cook and think about healthy diets. For example, a young person's health and welfare has improved significantly because of the home's work with the young person and their family. The way the home provides support means that young people benefit holistically from support in different areas of their lives. This support is enhanced by children and young people living for a short time in a group setting. A parent commented 'it's good for him to see other kids with different needs, this is really healthy for him as he learns to accept difference and he doesn't feel so isolated with his disability'.

Young people benefit from the home's effective work with schools which helps them improve their achievement. Young people learn to behave better in different settings which helps them learn. They take part in and enjoy a wide range of activities and interests that support their education and helps them develop new skills and new relationships. For example, celebrating different cultures with theme nights, such as 'St Andrews night', 'Buddha Day' and Hindu celebrations. This improves young people's confidence and sense of self-worth and enables them to make a positive contribution to their local community.

Children and young people enjoy positive contact with their families and friends while they stay at the home. One parent said, "I get a call every night for an update or just

a chat about how the day has gone, this is great because we can share with the staff what works and vice versa". The high level of support for families as well as their children greatly enhances family relationships.

Quality of care

outstanding

Relationships between young people and the staff team are excellent. There is a clear relationship of trust between the young people and staff which means that young people feel safe and relaxed. Care planning is clearly and specifically focused on young people's individual needs and based on their wishes and aspirations. placement plans set out children and young people's preferences as well as their care needs. A social worker said, "the staff here are very important to the overall planning for the children and young people as they know them really well".

Placement plans set out in impressive detail how staff should approach and interact with them. For example, the plans for children and young person are very specific about how they like to communicate and how this communication differs when they are distressed. This is important as it prevents the young person from being distressed and a possible challenge as a result of this. The staff team understand the young people and follow a very positive and proactive approach to supporting and managing their behaviour. Sanctions are not used in the home.

The excellent placement plans are reviewed and updated very regularly with the input of young people, their families and social workers where necessary. This means that they continue to be a highly relevant guide to helping the young person make progress and achieve positive outcomes. Young people's preferences and views are sought by a wide range of methods based upon each young person's needs. Most importantly, staff members spend a great deal of time with young people to ensure their views are heard. Clear and outcome focused records of these sessions are retained. A great deal of information about the running of the home is provided to young people and their parents in pictorial format and professionally produced DVD formats.

Young people's educational achievement is exceptionally well supported. The home works very closely with schools to provide a consistent approach to young people's care and supports needs. This is successfully managed in such a way as to improve their behaviour and achievement in class. Placement plans include educational objectives for young people and how these can be supported in the home. This reinforces the work done in school so young people are helped to learn new skills.

Young people are encouraged, supported and assisted to take part in new activities and learning opportunities. These are offered based on the staff team's detailed knowledge of the young people, their families and their situations. This approach not only helps young people to continue activities they usually take part in at home but

also to have new experiences which broaden their horizons.

The home's highly individualised care planning system and the very detailed knowledge staff have of the young people means that each young person's uniqueness is recognised, respected and supported. This system is enhanced by joint staff meetings with family support workers and staff from CAMHS. This enables a consistent approach to the support given to children and young people and promotes a continuity of care and support for children and their families.

Young people's cultural needs are met in a sensitive manner and there is a clear focus on reducing any disadvantage they may face as a result of their disability. The support provided to young people extends well beyond the times they stay at the home. This on-going relationship and work with young people and their families helps improve their lives with their families.

The home's environment is of a very high quality. All necessary equipment and aids are in place to assist young people but the home retains an extremely comfortable domestic feel. The layout and design of the home meets young people's needs. The high quality of the furnishings, equipment and decoration is excellent and demonstrates the value the home places on the young people who use its service. The staff ensure that the young people have individual items, such as their preferred duvet sets and personalised pictures, placed in their bedrooms prior to their short break stay. This gives children and young people a sense of belonging and helps to allay any anxieties.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

The home is a safe place for young people to live in. Young people trust and feel confident with the staff team and enjoy spending time with them. Parents speak highly of the care provided to their children. One said, 'I have every confidence that the staff keep my child safe.'

Young people do not go missing. This is due to the high staffing ratios which mean young people are effectively supervised at all times. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to help keep young people safe.

Staff are very well trained in managing young people's behaviour including the use of physical intervention. Because of the positive and proactive way the home works with young people this is not currently required. Staff have a very comprehensive knowledge of the children and young people and quickly identify any triggers in behaviour patterns. Bullying does not take place in the home. However, all staff are alert to the possibility of young people upsetting others. Staffing levels are high and levels of supervision are excellent; care planning is very strong and individualised and relationships between young people are excellent.

The staff team understands how to safeguard young people including those who are additionally vulnerable because of their disabilities. They receive regular training in this area. Safeguarding young people is a key component of care planning and is fully embedded in practice.

The home's care planning process includes arrangements to identify and address potential individualised risks posed to young people in their day-to-day care and activities. This includes an individual emergency evacuation plan for every child and young person in the event of a fire. This ensures that children and young people are safe and protected from any potential harm.

Recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and ensures young people are only looked after by staff that are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Young people are protected from hazards by a wide range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager provides strong leadership and has an inclusive, open management style which staff value and reflect in their practice with young people. She is appropriately experienced and has a level five management qualification.

This is an extremely well managed home. Leadership from the Registered Manager is creative and inspirational and results in a service that continues to develop and improve. Managers understand the service well. Quality monitoring is of excellent quality and focuses on outcomes for young people as well as the effectiveness of the home's procedures. The home maintains clear records of its work with young people and analyses these to consider its effectiveness. It provides clear evidence of the positive outcomes it produces for children both for its own purposes and to provide evidence for inspections.

The home's staff team are well trained and supported. Staff are highly motivated and the team is closely involved in all aspects of the home's management and planning. The staff team is diverse, very experienced and qualified. This is further supported by a programme of on-going appropriate training in matters related to the needs of the young people accommodated. All staff have completed a level three qualification relating to working with children.

Staff are supervised and have annual appraisals. Team meetings take place regularly to allow the staff team to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer. Staff also use this time to reflect on young people's

progress and to decide how best to support them.

Staffing levels are based on young people's individual needs and allow a wide range of activities to take place and highly individualised and sensitive care to be provided. The home's records are of good quality and are regularly monitored and quality assured by the manager. This ensures that there is very effective case and recording supervision which enhance the outcomes achieved by young people.

The home has appropriate systems in place to notify Ofsted and other relevant bodies of significant events that occur within the home or with young people. This ensures that those with an interest in children and young people's welfare are kept appropriately informed. Records kept in the home are clear, accurate and up to date. Three recommendations for improvement were set at the last inspection and these have been met. No complaints have been received between inspections.

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.