

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC037647
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered provider address	Municipal Buildings, Cherryfield Drive, Liverpool L32 1TX
Responsible individual	Ruth France
Registered manager	James De Turberville
Inspector	Michelle Edge

Inspection date	14/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The children's home is continuing to provide a positive experience to young people with complex needs and learning disabilities. The staff are enthusiastic and committed to helping young people to enjoy their short break in a supportive and safe home. Staff have high aspirations for all young people, regardless of their disabilities, and they work hard to promote the young people's social and emotional development. Feedback from professionals, including social workers and senior managers, and through direct discussions with parents, is highly complimentary about the home and the high standard of care provided. One social worker said, 'The service is invaluable. The support the staff provide to young people and their families is excellent. Staff are very knowledgeable about all young people and work hard to ensure they all enjoy their stays. I don't think there is anything they could do better.' Staff are very creative and supportive when new young people start to enjoy their visits at the home. All visits are planned and the compatibility of the group of young people is carefully considered. Further consideration is given to staffing levels and young people's individual care needs. This ensures that all young people have a positive experience during their stay. One new young person has said 'I had fun' and 'I like it here' in his video diary. Photographs throughout the home and in their personal records show young people smiling and having fun. Since the last inspection, the registered manager has worked hard, in a short space of time, to consider the recommendations for areas of improvement. Work was completed on developing a new digital children's guide. This shows young people enjoying their stays and having opportunities to try new and exciting activities, including pumpkin picking, visits to the pantomime and sensory play. The home has also developed an 'achievement event' where parents and carers are provided with opportunities to see the progress of their child. All young people receive certificates, which celebrate the achievements that they have made. This included using a knife for the first time, going to the toilet or developing their independence skills. This is an effective way of demonstrating the progress and experience of young people. Managers and staff work hard and in a coordinated way with families, social workers, health professionals and young people's schools. Recent feedback from a parent included, 'They are lifesavers and I know when [name of young person]	

comes to stay, he has fun and is safe.' Another parent said, 'I have peace of mind that [name of young person] is in a safe environment, gets cared for well and loves the time she spends at the bungalow.'

Young people have a strong sense of safety and are protected from bullying, aggression, abuse and exploitation. They do not go missing from the home and are safe in the community. Staff give young people's safety the highest priority. They are well trained in safeguarding and are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, including those relating to young people's personal circumstances and disabilities. Staff take suitable steps to protect young people and promptly report any concerns about their welfare.

Young people's behaviour is usually very good. Staff support them very effectively when they experience difficulties and struggle to communicate their feelings. Staff understand the reasons for young people's behaviour and intervene positively to find out what the problem is. They provide young people with reassurance and excellent support. This includes not reacting to negative behaviour, but rather giving young people time to settle in a safe place to feel calm. This emphasis on managing young people's behaviour calmly and safely eliminates the need to use restraint.

Detailed risk assessments and behaviour management plans provide the staff with clear guidance and strategies on keeping young people safe. However, while staff had updated risk assessments and plans, they were not always signed and dated to indicate who the author of the change was and when the change was made. This did not have a direct impact on young people's safety, because staff demonstrate in-depth and up-to-date knowledge of individual's risks and their interventions are consistent and effective. This was clearly a recording matter, which the registered manager has identified as an area for improvement.

The registered manager provides strong leadership. He is well supported by a committed assistant manager. Together, they monitor effectively the quality of care and professional practice that young people receive. There has recently been a service review. As a result, the days that the home will operate on will change to meet the needs of the young people and their families. Managers and staff were fully involved in the consultation around the changes in the service. Although this has been a difficult time for all involved, it is a credit to the managers and staff that the high standards within the home have not been affected.

Information about this children's home

The home is managed by the local authority. It provides short-break care for up to four children who have physical and/or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/12/2016	Full	Good
04/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
07/01/2016	Full	Good
30/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendation

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

- All children's case records must be kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of the entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection 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

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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