

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC039038
Inspector	Catherine Honey
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Leicester City Council
Registered person address	New Walk Centre Welford Place LEICESTER LE1 6ZG
Responsible individual	Michael David Evans
Registered manager	Ranjit Singh Bains
Date of last inspection	13/02/2014

Inspection date	12/11/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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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The home provides a highly nurturing and stimulating environment for young people to live in. Young people are safe in the home and are further protected by excellent staff knowledge of safeguarding procedures. The staff know young people extremely well and are attentive to their needs. They take great care to promote young people's well-being and safety. A social worker stated, 'my young person is thriving.'

Strengths of the service include strong consultation with parents and placing social workers to ensure young people reach their full potential. Parents and carers value the service and feel staff know their children's needs extremely well. Strong partnership working with external professionals means that young people's educational and health needs are well-met. Care planning is detailed and personalised.

The Registered Manager has a clear goals and aspirations for the further development of the home. Robust quality assurance systems are effective in identifying areas that can be improved. Managers ensure that staff have sufficient time and resources to make these improvements. An area for improvement was identified at this inspection with the policy currently in place to ensure the use of electronic devices is safe and respects young people's privacy.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides residential care for seven young people with learning difficulties. It is owned and managed by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
12/07/2013	Full	adequate
05/03/2013	Interim	good progress
07/12/2012	Full	good

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 where specific measures, including electronic devices, are used to monitor children, there is a written policy that sets out how they should be used, how they promote the welfare of children, how children will be informed of their use, how legitimate privacy of children will be protected and how children will be protected from potential abuse of such measures. (NMS 10.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

There are high aspirations for all young people living at this home. Young people make great progress while living here and are enabled to reach their full potential. They make excellent progress from their starting points. For example young people increase their self-care skills, make progress with their communication, eating, health, self-esteem and behaviour. They achieve this in an environment of nurturing, praise and empowerment. Staff are highly knowledgeable about young people's goals and targets. This ensures that there is a clear focus on positive outcomes. As a result, young people become more confident in their abilities.

Young people benefit from frequent family contact and in some circumstances this has increased, leading to longer time spent in their family homes. Parents report that they feel welcome when visiting the home, are involved in their children's care and are very comfortable with staff. Young people benefit because, where appropriate, their families can visit them regularly and take a highly active role in their lives. Because the home works to support parents and families, the quality and quantity of family contact are maximised. Young people make positive transitions to semi-independence, adult care provisions or back to the family home through careful planning and support. Young people actively participate in decisions about their lives.

Young people make very good progress with their education placements. They have exceptionally good attendance and make positive progress consistent with the individual abilities and needs. Young people have excellent health outcomes. They begin to understand the importance of healthy living and are supported to make healthy lifestyle choices. For example, young people eat healthy snacks and a healthy and balanced diet which may be significantly different from the type of food they were previously used to. Some young people work directly with health practitioners to draw up their own healthy eating plans. Young people are encouraged to try new foods and where appropriate, parents are encouraged to work side by side with staff to ensure young people receive a healthy, well-balanced and culturally appropriate diet. All young people make good use of the support they receive from a range of health services.

Young people engage in a wide variety of activities within the home. Sometimes young people enjoy just sitting with staff, chatting and reading books, using the soft play area, or listening to music and watching changing coloured lights. There is a large garden which young people enjoy using. They also access the community and take part in activities such as youth club or gardening club, as well as visits to parks and other local amenities. Young people regularly go on holiday and attend local nearby events such as Diwali celebrations. This means young people are actively involved in the local community, visit new places and have opportunities to try a wide variety of new experiences. This helps increase their ability to feel comfortable and

safe in new environments, and offers opportunities for social interaction.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They benefit from relaxed, fun and warm interactions, which help them feel safe and secure. Interactions between staff and young people are adjusted to meet the communication needs and level of understanding of young people. Considerable care is taken to ensure that young people are well-matched. This promotes the well-being and safety of each young person.

Since the last inspection consultation methods used with parents has been an area of development within the home. For example, where appropriate, parents have been invited to attend training sessions with the staff team to enable them to learn about how to best meet their individual child's needs jointly with staff. This has led to better promotion of health outcomes for young people and empowers parents to feel confident about meeting their children's complex needs. A parent stated, 'staff are lovely. They consult with me about my child's care. They always ring me. We work together and communicate really well.' Where there are barriers to communication, staff work jointly with the placing authority to ensure parents are kept up to date on their young person's care. Feedback from parents and carers demonstrates the majority are highly satisfied with the communication and consultation they received from the home. The management team are committed to further improving methods of consultation to ensure this positive way of working is sustained.

Frequently updated care plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are individualised to the unique needs of each young person and describe in detail their day-to-day care needs. Young people feel secure and comfortable in their home because the staff understand their individual tastes and preferences. Young people's diverse communication styles are very well-known by staff. Techniques such as pictorial prompts, signing and speech are used to help young people show their wishes and feelings. Staff are skilled at identifying and interpreting young people's behaviour and personalities. Where young people become frustrated or agitated, staff skilfully communicate with them to help de-escalate and minimise any distress. Young people make choices in their daily lives in the home, such as choosing their food, activities to do and games to play. This ensures that all young people, including those with complex communication needs, influence the running of the home. A social worker commented, 'I can't believe the progress my young person has made.'

Young people's diverse health and medication needs are well met. Staff work closely with health professionals, and seek their expert advice appropriately. Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. There is a robust audit system in

place to ensure these arrangements remain of a high quality and are safe. There are strong working relationships with health professionals such as specialist paediatric nurses. Education providers confirm they have a positive working relationship with staff and there is regular sharing of information. This benefits young people as consistency of care is promoted. Young people's cultural and religious needs are promoted and the staff team reflect the diversity of the young people living at the home. Thorough shift planning ensures there is a balance of male and female staff to appropriately meet young people's needs.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding policy and practice and are particularly tenacious in their application of this. They know what to do if they are worried that a young person has experienced, or is at risk of, abuse. For example, if staff are not satisfied with an explanation given for marks or changes in behaviour exhibited by young people, they will share and escalate their concerns further. Managers and staff are conscious of the particular vulnerabilities of disabled children and have received safeguarding training which specifically focuses on the needs of disabled children. This helps minimise the risk of abuse.

Young people's vulnerabilities and comprehension of risk are carefully balanced to allow them opportunities to become more independent. Individual young people's care plans include personalised risk assessments. These plans include behaviour management plans to avoid the use of restraint and are effectively implemented by staff. Physical intervention is only used to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. Events are regularly reviewed at staff meetings and monitored through internal review processes to identify patterns and trends. Behaviour management plans are regularly updated to reflect behaviour triggers and are effective in decreasing incidents of challenging behaviour.

There has been one occasion of a young person going missing from the home since the last inspection. The home has links with the local police in relation to missing from care events and the appropriate procedures were followed to ensure the young person returned to the home safely. High staffing levels and close staff vigilance mean that missing events are extremely rare. Triggers for young people going missing, such as receiving distressing news, are carefully considered by staff and risk assessments have been effective in helping prevent further episodes. Incidents of missing are followed up thoroughly to help young people understand the risks they may be putting themselves at.

The home is a safe environment. Young people are protected by the health and safety routines in place such as regular electrical appliance testing. The building and grounds are well-maintained and hazard free. Recruitment practice ensures that adults working at the home are carefully vetted, through measures such as verbal verification of references, to ensure unsuitable people do not have access to

vulnerable children.

To aid a young person's safety and welfare, a camera is used to monitor a bedroom. All appropriate permission is in place for the use of this measure from healthcare professionals, the placing authority and parents. However, although there is a clear plan in place for the use of the camera, there is lack of detail specifying how the young person will be informed of the use of the camera and protected from potential abuse of such measures. This is a policy issue rather than a practice issue as during day-to-day use staff take clear steps to ensure young people's privacy is protected.

Leadership and management

outstanding

An enthusiastic Registered Manager leads the home with the support of a management team. The manager is well-qualified for the role having achieved both a social work and residential child care qualification. He is determined that young people should receive the best possible care and have the best opportunities when they reach transition age. Although no requirements or recommendations were set at the previous inspection, the home has clear strategies for improvement. The manager is highly reflective and realistic, for example, where areas of development are identified through independent monitoring visits, internal monitoring or inspections, the manager ensures there is sustained and continued improvement in those areas resulting in improved standards of care.

The staff spoken to are extremely enthusiastic about their work, are highly knowledgeable about young people's needs and feel very supported by the senior leadership team. The manager is up-to-date with forthcoming changes to residential childcare legislation and has disseminated this information to staff. This ensures both the management team and staff are up to date with potential changes on the legal framework for the residential care of children.

There is a sufficient number of staff to meet young people's needs and provide the high levels of support and supervision young people require. Staff receive regular, focused and good quality supervision and regular staff meetings. This allows staff members to reflect individually and as a whole staff team on young people's needs, how well those needs are being met and focus on areas for improvement. Managers use supervision effectively to set high expectations and challenge staff to improve the quality of care provided. Comprehensive handovers during the day aid staff in providing consistent and responsive care.

Good quality training both within their induction periods, as well on-going refreshers help staff deliver excellent care. Training undertaken since the last inspection includes specialist health and disability awareness training to help staff meet young people's individual needs. Currently, the majority of the staff team have obtained the required diploma in childcare qualification or equivalent, with the remaining members of staff actively completing the course. They also have a good understanding of

equality and diversity. This ensures young people are cared for and supported by staff who hold relevant and current skills to meet individual children's needs.

Improvement is also promoted by robust quality assurance processes. These systems are good at identifying weaknesses and potential shortfalls. Actions generated through quality assurance processes are quickly and positively addressed by the home. There has been one formal complaint since the last inspection. This was promptly addressed and resolved. The Registered Manager shows learning and reflection from this complaint and as a result, procedures have been appropriately amended.

There is a Statement of Purpose in place. The children's guides as well as other important documents, such as further information about children's rights, are accessible to young people through a variety of communication formats. These documents clearly and accurately describe the aims and objectives of the home for young people, parents and social workers.

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.