

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/07/2015
Unique reference number	SC039038
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 Evans
Registered manager	Ranjit Singh-Bains
Inspector	Catherine Honey

Inspection date	14/07/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC039038

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Children's and young people's range of complex and significant needs are extremely well met by staff. Considerable progress for all children and young people is evident from their starting points. As a result, they have vastly increased opportunities to reach their potential, be included in society and have opportunities for greater independence.
- Excellent transition planning is well implemented for both children moving in to the home and young people moving on. One young person has a highly planned move to supported living and another has made so much progress he is moving back to his parents' care.
- Staff and the management team's knowledge of children's and young people's individual needs is exceptional. They have an in-depth understanding of their individual traits, likes, dislikes and provide care which enables children and young people to feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- A significant strength of the home is the effective, transparent and successful partnership working with professionals and stakeholders. All professionals consulted as part of the inspection agreed that their views and opinions are listened to and there are opportunities for healthy debate with managers and staff for the benefit of children and young people.
- Parents' views and opinions are highly regarded. Parents are regularly consulted with and the majority feel very comfortable visiting the home. They are encouraged to remain part of their child's care as much as possible, where this is appropriate. A parent stated, 'It's like we're all one big family.' This creates a positive impact for children and young people, who see their parents treated in a respectful and valued way.
- A strong management team drives high expectations, improvement and innovation. Staff members state they feel listened to and are able to freely air their views and opinions.

- A minor shortfall was identified in the cleanliness of a young person's bathroom. While the rest of the home benefits from high levels of cleanliness, one bathroom was not up to standard.

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that each child's day-to-day health and well-being needs are met. This specifically refers to cleanliness in bathrooms. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 33, paragraph 7.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation to seven children or young people with learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
12/11/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
13/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
12/07/2013	CH - Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Children and young people, with a range of complex and significant needs, make excellent progress in all areas of their development. This is as a result of the consistent, focused and highly individualised support they receive. They experience stability and nurturing care in a homely environment. Some make such significant progress from their starting points that plans are in place for them to return to the family home. A professional stated, 'I have noticed significant improvements in a young person's communication skills and other young people's behaviour and anxieties.' Others grow in confidence, they develop life skills, incidents of challenging behaviour decrease and they are more able to access the wider community. A social worker said, 'He's a different boy. He's a happy boy. He glows when he is with certain members of staff.' As a result, their life experiences are enhanced. Excellent transition planning systems are used to ensure that children's and young people's moves in to the home or away from the home are positive. A young person has moved in to the home since the last inspection. The transition was slowly and sensitively managed in relation to the young person's needs over several months. The young person gradually increased the amount of time spent at the home, giving him the opportunity to become familiar with the environment and other young people. Particular attention was given to aiding consistency, with systematic information sharing from the placement the young person was leaving to the staff at the new home. Pre-placement impact assessments are effective in ensuring that the mix of young people living in the home do not pose safeguarding risks to each other. Individual needs, risks, and vulnerabilities are carefully considered and balanced. As a result, the young person has quickly settled in to the home's routine, staff have an excellent knowledge of his needs and all the children and young people are familiar with each other. For young people moving away from the home, for instance to supported living, the transition planning is equally as sensitive, detailed and consistent, ensuring they have the best opportunity for a good start to their adult lives. Children's and young people's health needs are well met. There is close working with the child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) to ensure staff understand and use the most appropriate strategies for working with children and young people. If out of character changes are noticed, support from CAMHS and other professionals is immediately sought to consider the best way forward; this helps children and young people receive the best care for their individual needs. There are healthy diets and lifestyles. A chef prepares daily nutritious home-cooked	

food; children and young people are encouraged to help in the kitchen to learn about cooking and healthy lifestyles. Some have specific diets and are provided with the appropriate food to meet their dietary or cultural needs. Exercise is encouraged, and on a daily basis children and young people engage in exercise, for example, swimming, walking or using gym equipment at the local park. Despite this focus on healthy lifestyles, some have recently put on weight and staff are working closely with health professionals to implement strategies and plans to ensure this is monitored.

Staff knowledge of children's and young people's individual needs is excellent and is enhanced by their use of individual communication strategies. Since the last inspection, the home has developed, in consultation with communication specialists, increased use of communication boards and pictorial communication systems. Although this research-informed system is relatively new and its impact is yet to be seen, it demonstrates the commitment staff have to ensuring consistency for children and young people, as the same system is used both in the home, at school and in children's and young people's family homes where appropriate.

Consultation and relationships with parents are strengths of the home. The vast majority of parents consulted during the inspection are extremely happy with the care their child receives. Parents feel they still retain a voice in their child's care and their views are appreciated and listened to. The majority of parents feel valued. Staff speak of their respect for parents, acknowledging the very difficult situation parents find themselves in when they need additional support to care for their child. This benefits children and young people as close working between staff and parents helps parents increase their understanding of their child's needs, promoting better contact and allowing some parents to work towards their children coming home where this is part of an agreed care plan.

A shortfall was identified in the cleanliness of a young person's bathroom. The usual high standards of cleanliness at the home were not adhered to on this occasion.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Safety and well-being are promoted through well-implemented and comprehensive risk management strategies used both inside and outside the home. Children and young people are carefully monitored and supported through high staffing levels. Despite this high level of attention, staff do not stifle children's and young people's rights to make their own choices and move around their home freely. Staff balance safety needs to ensure other children and young people are safe, and the child or	

young person themselves is comfortable in their environment. As a result of this and high staffing ratios, children and young people are well protected from any risks they may pose to one another.

Complaints about the home are rare as a result of the high levels of communication and consultation with professionals and parents. When complaints are received, they are diligently investigated in full consultation with other professionals, such as the local authority designated officer, social workers and independent reviewing officers. Leaders and managers take account of any learning or opportunities for further development where identified and implement this in practice.

Incidents of children and young people going missing or absent from the home are rare. There have been no instances of this since well before the last inspection. If any incidents of concern arise, there is a robust response and learning is implemented in practice. For example, where a shortfall in children's and young people's safety at night time was identified, a comprehensive debrief and robust safety plan helped ensure they are now safer at night time.

Vulnerable children and young people are further protected through well-implemented safeguarding systems such as detailed recordings of any untoward events or accidents. Use of physical intervention has decreased since the last inspection. Safeguarding systems are further strengthened by an ethos of transparency and high levels of information sharing between professionals and parents where appropriate. Staff knowledge of safeguarding practice is thorough. There are regular opportunities for staff to reflect and review their practice through case, group and individual supervisions. These systems help ensure children's and young people's safety remains paramount.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The registered manager has been in post for a number of years. He is a qualified social worker as well as holding the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management in Residential Childcare as required by regulation. The manager and management team drive high expectations of the care children and young people receive, and they are constantly considering ways in which the home can further improve and embrace innovation. The home has an ambitious development plan, and the management team demonstrates a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. The team is reflective, for example, understanding that new initiatives and changes, such as the new communication boards, need time to embed and for staff, children and young people to become accustomed to and	

benefit from them.

Highly successful partnership working benefits children and young people. For instance, staff regularly visit children and young people at school and work with education staff to share strategies and ideas. Education staff are regularly welcomed to the home to share their learning and skills to ensure there is consistency of approach. An education professional stated, 'Staff are so helpful to us. We are all working together to identify the best for the young person. They are really very supportive.'

Suitable systems of supervision, appraisal and high quality training are well used to help staff develop. Team meetings are a time for staff to give their views and opinions in a supportive environment. Most staff have high morale and have great enjoyment in their roles. A staff member stated, 'I'm very happy in my job. I feel supported; we've had changes to adjust to and the pace can be quick but we all love it.'

At the last inspection, a shortfall was identified in the recording of the duration of restraint; records now clearly demonstrate the duration of each restraint, ensuring they are a more accurate and factual reflection of the event.

Staff and the management team are proactive in using recent changes in legislation, such as the revised Children's Homes Regulations, to consider improving practice within the home. For example, in consideration of children's and young people's right to freedom and liberty, fewer internal doors are now locked. Children and young people are invited in to the office area and staff adapt their way of working to ensure safety and security of information are maintained. The front door is kept locked due to children's and young people's high vulnerability and limited sense of danger. They each have a risk assessment which considers the reason for this restriction. Consideration is being given to children and young people with a greater understanding of risk and danger having use of the front door by being able to freely enter or exit. These changes not only help create a homely and non-institutionalised feel, they demonstrate how staff value and respect children's and young people's liberty and promote independence while ensuring their safety is maintained.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 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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