

Inspection report for children's home

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC040491        |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Guy Mammatt     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Registered person</b>         | Cornwall Council                   |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | County Hall TRURO Cornwall TR1 3AY |

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b>  | Katherine Margaret Brown |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | Deborah Kate Moses       |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 02/10/2013               |

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b> | 22/05/2014 |
|------------------------|------------|

|                                          |                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Previous inspection                      | inadequate progress                                             |
| Enforcement action since last inspection | There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection. |

|                                        |             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>This inspection</b>                 |             |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>           | <b>good</b> |
| Outcomes for children and young people | good        |
| Quality of care                        | good        |
| Keeping children and young people safe | good        |
| Leadership and management              | adequate    |

## Overall effectiveness

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Judgement outcome | <b>good</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|

The home provides a good quality of care with good outcomes for children. Children are provided with personalised, well planned care that takes into account their individual needs. The home has developed excellent communication techniques between staff and all children, both non-verbal and verbal. This allows children to prosper while at the home and achieve personal milestones that may otherwise not have been possible.

Children very much enjoy accessing the home. Parents feel confident that their children are in a safe and nourishing environment. Children have excellent relationships with the staff team; they respond positively to their enthusiasm and commitment. Children are actively encouraged to contribute their views on the care provided at the home through a wide range of opportunities. The home also works closely with families. It includes them in the care of their child and offers them support to maintain consistency across their life.

The home has a wide range of resources and activities that promote the enjoyment of children accessing the home, and develops their life skills and social opportunities.

There are sound managerial arrangements in place at the home and the staff team

are managed and support well.

There is one requirement made as result of this inspection that an independent visitor should conduct the monthly monitoring visits . There are three recommendations although none of the issues were seen to have had an impact on the children using the home. The recruitment of new staff does not include the telephone verification of references to check their validity. There is also an over reliance on agency staff who are not always familiar to the children. Some staff also require training in autism awareness to fully support the children.

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a local authority and provides short-break care for up to six children and young people with a learning disability or a combined learning and physical disability. The home operates for five nights each week, spanning Wednesday through to Monday morning, with a maximum of six places per night.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement  |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 02/10/2013      | Interim         | inadequate progress   |
| 04/04/2013      | Full            | good                  |
| 27/09/2012      | Interim         | satisfactory progress |
| 02/05/2012      | Full            | good                  |

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

### Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Reg.         | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Due date   |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 33<br>(2001) | ensure that registered provider shall appoint, at the registered provider's expense, an independent person to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with this regulation. (Regulation 33 (1)) | 30/06/2014 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure that all people working in or for the home are interviewed as part of the selection process and have references checked to assess suitability before taking on responsibilities. Telephone enquires are made as well as obtaining written references to establish their validity (NMS 16.1)
- ensure that the overall number, competence and deployment of staff and number and deployment of staff, both as a group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose and meet the needs of all children resident in the home; with particular reference to reducing the reliance on agency staff to fulfil the planned rota (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that children are looked after by staff who are trained and competent to meet their needs; with particular reference to ensuring that all staff receive training in autism awareness. (NMS 18)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Outcomes for children at the home are good with some outstanding aspects. People who know the children best state that the children love attending the service and that their face lights up when it is their day to attend.

Children are making excellent progress in developing their skills and confidence. They access a wide range of opportunities during the stay. As a result they have developed skills that include domestic chores, personal hygiene routines and they have also made new friendships. Some children who had highly irregular sleep patterns now sleep soundly and others that used to slide along on the floor around the home now walk almost everywhere.

Children benefit from accessing a wide range of stimulating activities during their stay. This promotes their enjoyment of using the service as well as broadening their experiences of the community and environment around them. Children take part in local festivities and local nature projects that combine exploring the natural seasons with art and craft skills.

Children are able to communicate their wishes during their time at the home and will often make plans with staff for their next visit. They take part in a wide range of communication opportunities that greatly contributes to them feeling included in the planning for each stay. As a result, children feel valued, listened to and important. This empowers the children and helps to build their self-confidence.

Children enjoy good health outcomes while using the home. They benefit from a safe, well-maintained environment with facilities that are accessible to all children. Their health needs are well accounted for and their preferences are sought to ensure that they have a comfortable and enjoyable stay.

Children make good progress in developing independence skills relevant to their age and ability. Well planned specific targets allow them to achieve within their potential and build on each success. Some children have become so confident with their new communication skills that they are now feel able to use their non-verbal communication methods in the community while out shopping.

### Quality of care **good**

Staff are well equipped to communicate with all children including those with a learning disability. Staff use Makaton, Picture Exchange Communication systems (PECs) and intensive interaction to aid effective communication. This allows children

to make choices about their care and to be involved in decisions at the home. This also greatly increases their enjoyment when attending the home and has decreased outbursts of frustration.

The home provides care that develops the children's confidence and independence skills. High quality planning ensures that their diverse needs are met in each planned stay. Measurable targets are agreed at reviews for children with input from families, professionals and key workers. The home shares its successful strategies with families to ensure that children continue to make good progress across their life.

The home is extensively resourced with a wide arrange of play and sensory equipment. This is designed to allow children to have fun and learn skills through play. Good staffing levels support them to enjoy experiences that may not otherwise be available to them; for example, pet therapy with a dog and access to positive interactions with other animals and their trainers. These experiences have a therapeutic value for the children and a calming influence on their behaviour.

The home provides informative welcome packs for all children and families that cater for the range of abilities of children that attend. As a result children receive a good amount of information about the home before they attend. This helps them settle in quickly and maximise their potential during their stay.

The home provides good quality introductions to the service. Parents and children feel reassured and confident very quickly when beginning to use the home. All transitions are individually assessed and planned at the pace of the child. The home is considerate when matching children together on the same visit to ensure that they all feel safe and have opportunities to make appropriate friendships.

The home has good quality relationships with the families and works collaboratively with them to ensure the best possible experience for the child. In many cases the care provided by the service enables the children to continue to live at their family home. Parents are very appreciative of the home and state they 'cannot praise them enough' and that they 'would be lost without them'.

Staff place the well-being of individual children at the centre of their practice at the home. Staff are dedicated and show great perseverance to help children achieve, irrespective of the challenges they present. Children's achievements and personalities are recognised and frequently celebrated at the home.

Staff actively support children in their education. The home has good links with all of the schools that the children attend and staff also attend meetings at the schools. Staff support the children with their homework through accessing the library and the internet which helps them with their research and projects.

## **Keeping children and young people safe    good**

Families and placing authority representatives feel confident that there are no detrimental issues impacting on the safety of the children during their stay. Children feel safe and generally any disruptive behaviour and anxieties have decreased since they began coming to the home.

The home has a sensible approach to managing the dynamics between children. Informal group discussions take place between staff and children around their emotions and the implications of what they may say on each other's feelings. As a result, bullying is not an issue at the home and they have learnt to share resources amicably.

Children do not display any risk taking behaviour and do not attempt to go missing from the home. Physical intervention by staff is infrequent and is only used to maintain the safety of the child involved. There are good follow up procedures in place after serious incidents of restraint to ensure the welfare of all involved is monitored and recorded.

Positive support plans are in place for children where necessary. They emphasise the identified distraction and diversion strategies for each child. This ensures that the number of incidents of physical intervention is greatly minimised.

Individual risk assessments for children are of good quality. They include good detail of the hazard identified, clear prescriptive control measures for staff to follow and precautions that are already in place to protect the children from harm. This helps to keep the children safe while also allowing them to explore and have fun.

The home promotes positive behaviour by enabling better communication opportunities with the children. This decreases their frustration of not always being understood and has a positive effect on their attitude and engagement during their stay. In most cases this also has further beneficial results when the children go back to their family home.

The recruitment and vetting of new staff is sound and meets the expectations in the regulations. However, the process does not include a telephone verification of employee's references to check that they are genuine. A recommendation is made to ensure this becomes part of the procedure for employment checks for all new staff and volunteers.

Safeguarding procedures are sound. They have been no reported safeguarding concerns or complaints during the inspection period. Investigations by the provider into staff's practice are handled fairly and promptly to provide effective protection for all children.



## **Leadership and management**

## **adequate**

The Registered Manager has been in post for ten years and is suitably experienced and qualified to fulfil the role. Both requirements from the previous inspection have been met. This now ensures that the home conducts further employment checks on staff which minimise the potential of unsuitable adults working with vulnerable children. Agency staff used are now appropriately supervised to fulfil their role properly.

The home is over reliant on the use of agency staff though because currently recruitment is difficult. All attempts within the home are made to ensure that familiar agency staff are used to provide continuity of care and that the standards of care within the home do not decrease. There have not been any serious incidents that have caused harm to the children as a result of this. However, from a child's perspective this is not acceptable as they are sometimes being looked after by unfamiliar adults.

The independent visitor's monitoring visit of the home is not carried out by an independent person but by the Responsible Individual of the home. This has not had an impact on the quality of care at the home. However, an alternative arrangement is required to ensure that this shortfall in meeting statutory requirements is addressed.

The staff team receive a good level of professional supervision to ensure that they are suitably directed and supported to fulfil their role. Training opportunities and professional development are generally good; although half of the staff team have not completed autism awareness training. As a high percentage of children using the service are autistic, it is essential that all staff have a good level of understanding of autistic spectrum condition.

The home works proactively with the local authority to ensure its service meets the needs of a wide range of children in the area. The home has recently extended its provision to also accommodate children with physical disabilities.

Monitoring of the home by the Registered Manager is thorough and evaluative. This ensures that the home is run smoothly and efficiently. The Registered Manager also works well with external agencies and families to ensure that providing positive outcomes for all children is at the forefront of the home's ethos.

The Registered Manager can demonstrate the difference the home has made to the child's life experiences and abilities. Placing authority representative's state the home is an 'outstanding service' and comment that the home provides 'an amazing service to children and families'.

The home has excellent resources to meet the needs of the children. The home is well maintained and the Registered Manager incorporates the ideas and wishes of the

children into the redecoration of the home.

## 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.