

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	7 January 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is a home for up to five young people with a learning and/or physical disabilities. The building is set in large grounds and accommodation is spread over three wings and two floors. Ground floor accommodation comprises of a lounge area, bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen, dining room, quiet lounge, soft play area, laundry facilities and offices. The first floor is mainly unused office space, although there is a sensory room and art room which are used by the young people. The home has specialist moving and handling equipment and baths available for young people with physical disabilities.

The home is situated half a mile from the centre of town, which has a range of shops and amenities. A vehicle with wheelchair access is available for young people to access community facilities.

Summary

This was a key unannounced inspection of the service to assess compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. The inspection was undertaken over a two day period. The home was assessed under the six headings of 'Every Child Matters' - Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation. The overall rating of the home was good with Being Healthy receiving an outstanding judgement.

The care manager had completed pre-inspection documentation as had some members of staff. Information from these are included in the main body of the report. There were four young people in residence at the home and all were seen during the inspection, with one young person participating in the inspection process.

The inspection identified that young people are happy living at the home and are well supported by the staff team. Staff work closely with other agencies, to ensure all identified needs are met. Care records are of a high standard and staff are well trained and skilled at working with young people with profound learning disabilities.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. Night time fire safety has been discussed with the fire service and new procedures put into place to meet this standard. The young people's guide has been reviewed and is now available in a pictorial form, for those young persons unable to understand the written format. Staff are aware of the home's procedures and practices and all policies are available on the computer and discussion on these features in the monthly staff meetings.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

All meals provided are completed after consultation with the young people and their families (where possible). Shopping lists are done on a weekly basis to include the meal choices of young people. The majority of foodstuffs are delivered direct to the home. The meals available

are enjoyed by young people and account is taken of their likes and dislikes. Healthy eating is promoted and meals include fresh vegetables and salads. Fresh fruit is available to young people at all times. Staff are careful to limit the amount of unhealthy snacks consumed by young people. Currently there are no special diets but staff are committed to ensuring that young people are provided with food that promotes good health and wellbeing. Staff and young people eat together and promote mealtimes as a social occasion. All staff involved in the preparation of food have completed the relevant training in food safety and hygiene. Following an inspection of the kitchen it was found to be exceptionally clean and all stocks and supplies were stored appropriately.

Care plans are in place that set out the health needs of young people and action is taken to manage health care requirements. Comprehensive records are maintained that include details of past and current health concerns. Young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. All health checks are up-to-date and staff will accompany young people to their health appointments. Appropriate resources are available to meet the complex needs of young people where necessary. Staff liaise very closely with all health professionals involved with the young people and will advocate on behalf of young people to ensure that their needs are met. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and young people are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities suitable to their age and capabilities. Young people receive excellent support with their personal care needs and all personal hygiene requirements are managed sensitively.

Policies and procedures are in place for the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Staff have received training in the safe handling of medication and first aid. Medication is stored safely in the care staffs office. All medication records were checked and all found to be in order. All accidents are recorded appropriately. This ensures that young people's health needs are appropriately addressed and promoted. Staff work closely with associated medical professionals, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), to ensure that care planning takes full account of young people's mental and physical health requirements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's files are stored appropriately to protect their confidentiality. The home has a complaints procedure which sets out the action that will be taken following receipt of a complaint. There have been no complaints made since the last inspection. There are systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of the young people. Staff receive training in child protection and in discussion demonstrate they understand the local authority policy and procedures.

Although bullying is not currently an issue in the home, young people (where able) are made aware that bullying is not acceptable in the home and they are provided with information about what to do if they are concerned about bullying. There have been no incidents of absconding behaviour since the last inspection. Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the encouragement of positive behaviour. Staff use constructive responses to inappropriate behaviour and the sanctions used in the home are appropriate. There was a record of one incident, when staff had to restrain a young person and all staff working in the home have received restraint training. A log book of restraints is kept in the home and this meets current legislation.

Young people and staff are safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. Appropriate servicing has been carried out on the electrical installations, the emergency lighting and the fire equipment. Gas installations are serviced annually. There was a comprehensive fire and environmental risk assessment in place, which is reviewed annually. Risk assessments are in place for the young people's indoor and outdoor activities.

There is an effective system in place to monitor any visitors to the home. Security systems throughout the home are good and protect young people at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Some young people's learning disabilities result in them displaying some very challenging behaviours and these can impede their access to education. All the young people, currently placed, have placements at local special schools and all have statements of special educational need. The staff support young people well to complete their homework and achieve success within school and they facilitate a good range of educational activities. Young people's education is promoted and there is a good working relationship between the home and the schools that the young people attend. Staff attend school events and parents evenings and are fully involved in any meetings and reviews.

Young people are encouraged and supported to pursue their leisure interests. The home has its own transport and there are frequent trips out. Risk is assessed and documented and young people are enabled to undertake activities with staff support. Young people are given individualised support in accordance with their needs and wishes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's individual needs are comprehensively assessed and files examined contain appropriate looked after children (LAC) documentation, which informs placement planning. Placement plans are clear and are supported by robust action plans and identifying specific objectives. These are reviewed on a monthly basis. Short and long term care plans are implemented and evaluated regularly. Each young person has a named key worker, who is responsible for keeping the care plans up-to-date, ensuring young people's needs are met and communicating information to other members of staff. The staff in the home input into the daily care plan at least three times a day, more often if required. The standard of record keeping was very good.

Young people where able, are encouraged to contribute to their reviews. The care plans contained evidence of reviews held and any changes made. The placement plans clearly identify contact plans for young people, including any restrictions. Staff confirm that contact arrangements are maintained and that all contact is facilitated in line with case records.

Where able, young people are encouraged to have a say in the running of the home and their overall care. Staff stated 'we make sure the children get the best from school and activities, we have a very good relationship with them'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home works well with the placing authority's and several schools that the young people attend. Reviews are held in line with regulation and young people and their families are encouraged to attend. Where possible young people are supported to help with tidying their rooms in line with their age and abilities. Staff spoken to stated 'the best thing about the home is the kids, we try our best to give them a good life'. No staff could comment on a negative point about the service.

Young people live in a large well-maintained home, all areas were very clean and decorated to a good standard. Bedrooms are single and where possible are personalised to reflect the interests and wishes of the young people. There is sufficient communal space including facilities for play and spending time on a one to one basis with staff. There is a very large enclosed garden to the rear which houses a huge outdoor play area. Two members of staff who completed a pre-inspection survey stated that they would like to have a modern shower in the home, which would help getting the young people up and ready for school in the mornings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's individual needs are fully assessed and staff work hard to enable all young people to achieve their potential, having regard for their diverse needs, wishes and circumstances.

The Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and gives good information to parents and professionals about the services which the home provides. The Young Person's Guide is also available in a pictorial format and provides information about the home to enable a young person and their families to know what to expect.

Young people receive the care they need from competent staff. Staff attend regular team meetings where they discuss individual needs and promote continuity of care. However regular supervision of all care staff is sporadic.

The number of staff on duty ensure that the needs of the young people are met. There is a robust on-call system, which is shared by senior management. Staff are suitably trained and all new staff undergo a six monthly induction programme when they start work. All care staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification Level three in Caring for Children and Young People. This exceeds the minimum 80% required and all new staff are expected to complete this qualification. Staff stated ' we are a good team here and we all support each other'.

There are good systems in place to monitor the operation of the home to ensure that good standards of care and support to the young people are maintained. The manager regularly monitors the records and looks at how the home can be improved and developed. Regulation 33 visits are also undertaken monthly by an independent source. There was no written annual development plan available outlining the future of the home, identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the home, or confirming the continuation of the homes current operation and resourcing.

Young people's files are kept securely in the front office and meet all the requirements outlined in the Children's Homes National Minimum Standards.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
31	Ensure that staff receive appropriate supervision Regulation 27(4)(a)	22 August 2009
33	ensure that a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation of the home or resources of the home, or confirming the continuation of the of the home's current operation and resourcing. Regulation 34	22 August 2009

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.