

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15 October 2009
Inspector	Elaine Clare
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	24 February 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

This service offers a home to four children with learning disabilities. The home is registered for both genders. At the time of this inspection, males occupied all four places. The home is a detached property standing in its own grounds. There is an enclosed rear garden where the children can play safely. Accommodation is well maintained and suitably decorated, creating a good first impression. Premises are suitably adapted to support the children's needs.

The home is situated approximately three miles from a nearby city centre. The home has a vehicle and is close to bus routes that connect it with the local community and rail links. The home has sufficient space and rooms where the children can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

The organisation responsible for the home is Progress Care and Education Ltd who operate an independent 52 week residential school. It is co-educational and caters for pupils and students between the ages of seven and 19 years. The school has 17 residential places with accommodation provided in four separate houses within the area. These properties are registered as children's homes. The organisation's policy is for houses to be detached properties located in suburban residential areas.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection of the service that took place at the start of the new term. At the time of inspection there were four young people living at the home. This service is intended to provide long term care for children and young people with complex learning disabilities. The service continues to provide a stimulating and safe environment for the young people living there. Documented and pictorial records show young people having had varied and creative programmes of activities and visits throughout the summer months. Staff support young people and their family both at the service premises and through elements of outreach work in their homes.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The service has responded to the recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to aspects of the dining facilities for children and staff who were working alongside them. The driveway has also been repaired. Improvements made include a heater and blinds fitted to the extension where children eat. There have been improvements to the safe recruitment of staff and a recent inspection of the home's personnel files judged it to be good.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The home promotes the health and welfare of young people and encourages them to live healthy lifestyles. Individual health care needs are well documented and supported by appropriate community health services. Staff are skilled in providing general first aid care and management of particular health conditions. Children have plenty of opportunities for healthy outdoor activity through regular trips and outings from the home and the service has use of specialist

equipment, facilities and play areas. When children are naturally less inclined towards activity they are still encouraged to take regular exercise and mobilise through the use of creative outings and known preferences. Catering arrangements at the home similarly reflect children's individual preferences whilst providing varied, balanced, healthy meals which children like. The appointment to an enthusiastic domestic post has released care staff time and importantly promotes healthy eating through creative menu planning in consultation with young people, their key workers and the nurse.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service promotes the welfare of children and young people and safeguards them through good practice and underpinning procedures. Because of the complexity of needs displayed by this group of young people the staffing levels are necessarily high and therefore so is the supervision of young people. Staff know the individual needs, state of development and behaviour patterns of young people very well. Staff provide children and young people with appropriate personal space whilst maintaining visual contact and deal sensitively with intimate personal care situations.

There are procedures and strategies in place for issues such as countering bullying, absconding and complaints but they are little used in practice. If parents have complaints or concerns about the care of their children they take these issues direct to the manager of the home. Most recorded issues have been low level concerns which have been resolved locally and in line with the service provider's general complaints policy. More serious complaints or concerns are processed through the complaints manager for the service provider.

Behaviour management is very individually assessed and strategies developed and reviewed in line with individual young people's response to these. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the use of physical interventions when required and these are accurately recorded in a purpose designed log. All behaviour related records are recorded for analysis as part of the ongoing improvements to the monitoring of standards of care within the home.

The general safety of the building and its environment, inside and outside is well managed through delegation. Records show all mains services have been maintained satisfactorily by professional contractors and there are good in-house procedures for testing and maintaining alarm systems. Staff recruitment is undertaken centrally by the service provider and their recruitment practice was judged to be good. There is no use of agency staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The nature of this service requires children have individual staff support in order to meet their needs. Most young people have allocated key staff, however two children have no allocated key worker. The children receive care from across the staff group as an important part of their development and to relieve staff from extremes of attachments. The service supports young people to maintain their education by working closely with the organisation's school and education staff. There are regular exchanges of information between the school and the service and the home's staff attend education reviews as far as possible. The young people have plenty of opportunities for social interaction and staff encourage them to try new or different events as part of their experiential learning. Individual likes and dislikes are well known by staff and

often used as an incentive to activity, exercise or a new experience. During the summer holidays the children and young people receiving care at the service have benefited from outings and activities arranged by staff on a daily basis. Some of these have required meticulous planning and risk assessment in order to achieve success.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are full records of assessment in place for the young people and agreed care plans for their time at the service. Reviews of placement plans and child in care reviews have taken place in a timely way and staff from the service compile a report prior to the meeting. In most cases formal review notes are posted to the home. In addition to reviews there is one record of transition planning meetings taking place and agreed outcomes for young people being put into action. The service works closely with family members to maintain free and regular contact arrangements for the young people. These arrangements are very individual and reflect changing circumstances in either the family or the young person. All such arrangements are negotiated between the service, family members and the caseworker.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

This service is a long term home looking after children and young people's complex needs and with other professionals, preparing the most suitable package of care to meet their needs. In respect of assessment the service has honed its skills and adapted to the challenges of meeting individual needs. Children in this service are not of an age that require the service to develop transition plans into adult service though there is reference in one child's review for the need to plan ahead. The service provision is in a detached property within its own grounds and well equipped to meet the diversity of needs presented by the children and young people it provides care for. Staff have made creative use of the space and bedrooms provide very individualised furniture and furnishings according to the child's and parents wishes.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation and management of the service is good and promotes the welfare of young people and staff. Staff are given ongoing supervision and development through the induction and probationary period. These then form part of the integral supervision structure. Monitoring of standards includes various checks and balances as well as reflective discussion at management and team levels. Staff training has been maintained at core level with limited opportunities for additional training external to the organisation.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff have received no training in this area and the manager felt that this was an area of future development. The organisation is sensitive to the individuality of each of the young people using the services. Staff take the views of parents into account and consult with children and young people in so far as they are able. Young people are encouraged to achieve to the level of their own potential whatever their level of disability.

The staff team has proven strengths in caring for children and young people with complex individual needs. Records and photographs show staff enabling children and young people to

have a range of experiences and enjoy normal activities for their age groups within a safe and nurturing structure.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes (NMS 7)
- provide training opportunities in equality and diversity to enable staff to be equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children (NMS 31).