

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	14/11/2013
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

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Service information

Brief description of the service

Children with a learning difficulty stay at this home that is operated by a local authority. Up to seven children can be accommodated for respite or permanent care placements.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Children make significant progress as a result of spending regular periods of full time and short breaks time at this setting. Highly motivated, sensitive and caring staff provide very individualised support to children with complex learning, health and communication needs.

The extremely effective multi-disciplinary working approach enables staff to provide the right level of care. As a result children have extremely positive outcomes in all areas including education and engagement in activities.

Children with complex communication difficulties have a voice in this home. Staff are relentless in promoting choice for each individual child. Staff use methods of communication particular to each child. Children are at the centre of practice and this can be seen with the extremely positive relationships between staff and children. Children enjoy their time spent at this setting. Professionals are very complimentary about the service.

The leadership and management of this service is going through a period of change. The interim management measures put in place are strong and effective. The new in post manager has a clear monitoring system but has not submitted reports to Ofsted as required, although this has no negative impact on the children.

Respite service has suffered due to the increased numbers of full time children, and staffing shortages; the manager and service manager are pro-actively addressing this.

Areas relating to fire safety need addressing, although none affect the immediate safety of children. The staff team need reminding of safe practice in regards to the safe storage of cleaning substances.

Areas for improvement

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
34 (2001)	ensure that the matters set out in Schedule 6 are monitored at appropriate intervals, with particular reference to the need to send an evaluation of the monthly monitoring of matters to HMCI at six-monthly intervals. Reg 34 (1)(a)	24/01/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the updating of the fire risk assessment of the building is undertaken in the near future (NMS 10.8).
- continue to review staffing and the impact it has on respite care taking children's and family needs into account (NMS 17)
- remind staff of the arrangements for the safe storage of substances hazardous to health (NMS10.3)
- better evidence the effectiveness of fire drills. (NMS 21.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Children make excellent progress in many areas of their lives as a result of staying at this service. They make excellent progress as a result of highly individualised support, which enables them to have improved confidence and to express themselves in unique ways. Children are able to access many activities in the wider community and enjoy the excellent facilities on offer at the setting.

Children benefit from staff promoting all aspects of health and well-being which

results in children having an understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Children's health and physical needs are addressed with close consultation with parents and medical professionals ensuring continuity of care and that individual needs are met.

Children are supported to develop an awareness of their behaviours and emotions which results in them being able to express themselves appropriately. Their emotional well-being is promoted to the highest level. As a result children are happy at the home and enjoy their time spent there. Parents are complimentary about the care their children receive and the multi professional working that delivers consistency of care.

Attendance at school is excellent and children are progressing, and achieving in line with their peers. Close working with education staff ensures continuity in social learning, behaviour management and health care while using the service. Individual targets include educational targets that are unique to each child. Children cannot take responsibility for their own health; however, they are encouraged and do get fully involved in reviews and meetings. Staff continually encourage children to make choices in all aspects of their lives; a real strength of the setting. However small, progress can be seen and staff give children great encouragement and praise.

Children are at the centre of all practice and there is a culture of respect and dignity. Children feel comfortable with staff and interact extremely well with them. Staff understand the specific ways each individual child communicates. This means children with severe communication difficulties have a voice and are able to make choices. Children are able to express themselves in as calm an environment as possible. As a result incidents are infrequent.

Children enjoy their stay at this setting and the time spent with staff.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Staff deliver consistently high standards of care meeting individual complex needs with commitment and sensitively. The approach to planning is excellent with well organised records kept and extremely comprehensive care plans in place that are reviewed and updated regularly.

Children benefit from outstanding positive relationships with staff who are focused on individual needs. Placement plan detail varies depending on the care package of individual children and how often they access the service. All include how the child is to be cared for from arrival to the time they leave. Children's views and opinions are valued and encouraged regarding their time spent at the home. While some children may not be able to participate in formal meetings or key-work sessions, the staff have a detailed knowledge of how each child voices their opinions and feelings and which is their preferred method of communication.

Staff support children to integrate into the wider community. The children thoroughly enjoy all the activities they participate in. Staff place the well-being of all children at the centre of their practices, consistently and professionally. Communication methods vary according to individual children's needs. Picture and new technology enable children to express their views and wishes and make choices. This also enables children to participate in their reviews.

All medication is stored appropriately and there is a comprehensive and thorough system to ensure safe receiving, administering and disposal of all medicines. Systems in place to check and monitor medication administration result in very few discrepancies. There are very detailed and up-to-date health plans in place for complex health needs such as epilepsy. Staff are very well trained in case of an emergency, and are able to administer emergency medication if necessary.

Accommodation at the home is of a very good standard. Children's needs are met at the setting with excellent resources such as a sensory room and play room. Staff respect children's privacy and ensure their dignity is maintained, especially when carrying intimate care needs.

Children are supported with their individual needs, including ethnicity; these are woven through their time spent at the home. Staff and parents/carers work together to ensure time spent at the home meets the child's needs and enables them to get the best out of their time spent away from their own family. Excellent provision and facilities and organised activities help this to be achieved.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Staff understand children's individual needs and vulnerabilities and do all they can to protect them from abuse and harm. Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a child's safety or welfare and keep comprehensive logs where appropriate. Clear procedures provide a framework for the staff to act on if they need to share concerns with safeguarding agencies. Any issues that have arisen are robustly dealt with and investigated to the highest level to ensure the safety of the children while staying at the home.

Staff are fully trained in the home's approved behaviour management restraint techniques and apply them only when necessary. The vast majority of physical interventions are soft and only carried out to prevent children from harming themselves. Non-verbal clues from children indicating how they are feeling is readily picked up by staff and acted upon. Interventions guide children rather than restrain them. Staff give children space and time out in a constructive manner to enable them space to calm down. This is used as a positive alternative to restraint, which is not always appropriate to use with children using the service.

Children do not go missing from care but staff are aware what to do should this happen. The home has clear protocols in place to deal with a child going missing

including profiles of each child. Supervision levels are high which lessens the risk of a child going missing.

Children may struggle to understand what bullying is, so the staff ensure that behaviour which may cause distress is carefully managed and that all the children are protected.

Children's physical safety is protected by robust risk assessments with regards to the premises, fire and activities, although the buildings fire risk assessment needs updating. The approach to risk management means that young people are able to take part in activities and outings with the support they need. Children are supported in taking part in regular fire drills, and fire equipment is checked on a routine basis. The recording of the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills is not consistent. The locking of cupboards that store cleaning fluids, that are possibly substances hazardous to health, was not safely applied; although not in an area where children had direct access.

The setting's recruitment policy is thorough and ensures children are protected from harm by robust personnel checks for staff.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **adequate**.

This service was managed by two part time registered managers. One has left since the last inspection and the other is on extended leave. The interim management plan put in place is effective and has not had any negative impact on the service provided. The interim manager is currently being processed by Ofsted to become the registered manager. The judgement for leadership and management takes this into consideration as there is currently no registered manager in day to day control of the service. However the interim manager has quickly gained knowledge of the children, the systems in place and the staff team with good effect. She has very good management skills and has a good overview of the service and has implemented developments across the service moving it forward. She is supported by the service manager and an extremely strong and effective senior care staff team who lead shifts on a daily basis ensuring consistency of care.

Recent admissions of full time children, with highly challenging needs have had an impact on the amount of respite the service can offer. This is being addressed by the manager and service manager but has had an impact on the teenage group held weekly and the ability to meet respite needs for all children. Staffing is sufficient with an active recruitment programme in place.

The service consistently meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose, apart from the amount of respite it can currently offer. Staff understand the ethos of the service and keep diversity and anti-discriminatory practice central to their work.

Established systems ensure the home runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, and up-to-date policies and procedures support and promote good practice. Parents, social workers, and education professionals are extremely positive about how the home operates.

The manager routinely makes good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to the quality of care, which results in improved outcomes for children. However they are not all submitted to Ofsted in line with current guidance. The targets for development of the service are realistic and fully involve the whole staff team. Staff receive excellent training, supervision and maintain excellent relationships with a wide range of multi professionals.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely. The management ensure the notifications are sent in and that all relevant parties are notified.

The previous recommendation made regarding upgrading of toilet and bathroom seats has been addressed.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.