

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC062785
Inspector	Sharon Lewis
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Nicola Anson
Date of last inspection	06/02/2014

Inspection date	24/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Children continue to benefit from consistently good outcomes. They are thriving in all areas of their lives, which is commendable considering their initial starting points. Children benefit from increased communication skills, stabilisation of their moods, reduction in their medication, improved social and independent living skills. This contributes to children's improved self-confidence and self-esteem. Children have a positive identity, through learning about their heritage and valued life story work.

Children benefit from a service which is continually evolving to meet their needs. The refurbishment programme is an excellent example of creating a purposeful child centred environment. Children benefit from the strong promotion of their rights. The home excels in their advocacy role and strongly promotes children's needs in professional arenas. Individualised support and care planning is centred on improving children's life chances.

Children benefit from the exceptional partnership working between the home and their educational establishments. This contributes to their good outcomes and helps them maximise their potential. Children enjoy an extensive range of life enriching activities. They receive encouragement to think about others and make a positive contribution to the home and wider society. Feedback from placing authorities, parents and involved professionals is very positive.

Safeguarding arrangements are generally sound. Staff succeed in providing holistic care within a safe environment. The home provides a place of safety for children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

Staff work well with children with challenging needs, through consistent care, rules and firm boundaries. Children receive protection from the home's health and safety practices. There is a good risk management system in place. The home's actively promotes contact arrangements and builds relationships with parents to reflect each child's best interests.

Children benefit from stable dynamic leadership and an experienced culturally diverse staff team. There is a good quality assurance system and competent implementation of the new regulations. Shortfalls are in relation to staff recruitment, sanction recording and the Statement of Purpose. These issues do not have a detrimental impact on children. The substantial strengths of this service outweigh these shortfalls. The home has a strong capacity to further improve and there is a realistic desire to develop an outstanding service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is registered with Ofsted to accommodate up to nine children. It offers long-term care, as well as respite care for children and young people with a learning disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/02/2014	Interim	good progress
29/10/2013	Full	good
14/12/2012	Interim	good progress
26/06/2012	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
17B (2001)	ensure sanction records include their effectiveness (Regulation 17B (3) (f))	01/12/2014
4 (2001)	update the statement of purpose to include the information on restraint training and staff competence as detailed in Schedule 1 (Regulation 4 (1))	01/01/2015
26 (2001)	ensure that no person starts work at the home unless full and satisfactory information is available in the form of a disclosure and barring certificate. (Regulation 26 (3) (d))	01/12/2014

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children continue to benefit from consistently good outcomes. They state that they 'feel happy at MIG'. Placing authorities highlight that children have made 'significant progress since being at MIG House'. Children are progressing in all areas of their lives, which is commendable considering their initial starting points. Children are growing in self-confidence, which is seen through their demeanour, attitude and self-determination. Staff comment that children's personalities are 'shining through' they gave examples of children now 'initiating conversation'.

Children confidently use a range of communication methods to express their needs and preferences. Professionals highlight children's improved listening skills, calm mood and their ability to follow instruction. Parents also highlight that their children have 'good skills and communicate better'. Children demonstrate good social etiquette, appropriately greeting others and interacting in a socially acceptable manner. Children are courteous and consider the needs of others. An example of this is making breakfast for each other. The stabilisation in mood has enabled children to have their medication reduced and for them to have more restful sleeping patterns.

Children have a positive identity; their care plans include a substantial focus on their heritage. Children receive a valued education on this topic. Creating family trees and life story work additionally contributes to their positive self-view. The home celebrates the diversity of the children and the staff group. Children learn to appreciate the religious and cultural traditions of others, through meals and cultural evenings. Children are able to observe their religious traditions and they also enjoy attending places of worship. Children's lives are also celebrated at their birthday parties.

Children enjoy an extensive range of life enriching activities. During the summer they enjoyed a holiday away, which included daily fun excursions to tourist attractions. Within the home children enjoy movie nights, arts and crafts and foot spas. They socialise with their peers at specific youth clubs. They make use of their local amenities, cinemas, bowling alleys, restaurants and shopping centres. They also attend local events, an example being town shows. Children receive encouragement to think about others and make a positive contribution to society. An example of this is the forthcoming plan to volunteer in a soup kitchen and create food baskets.

Children benefit from the home's active involvement in contact. Staff provide transport, escort children and are able to undertake specific work with parents. Staff closely monitor arrangements to ensure they promote the child's best interests. Children are able to meet with relatives within the home, there are now has two contact rooms. Children can enjoy a range of activities with relatives, within and outside of the home. This includes going abroad for a family holiday. Relatives are regularly invited to the home's social events. Staff provide regular updates to parents

which helps to maintain the family bond. Professionals comment that relationships between children and their parents are 'slightly better' since moving away from the family home.

Children highlight that they 'learn independence' which helps them prepare for adulthood. They all benefit from independent living targets which are tailored to develop their practical skills and personal development. Children are able to make snacks and drinks for themselves. They take turns to assist staff to prepare communal meals. Children assist in the daily household tasks which include assisting with their laundry, cleaning, grocery shopping, laying and clearing the table and washing up. Children take greater responsibility for their personal care and managing their continence. Out in the community children learn to use public transport. They independently place their orders in restaurants and scan items in supermarkets. Children learn the importance of saving and budgeting and manage their monies whilst out shopping paying for items.

Young people benefit from good quality transitions plans which enable them to successfully move into supportive accommodation. The lengthy transition ensures they are comfortable in their new surroundings. Staff provide ongoing reassurance and young people benefit from leaving parties where they receive gifts for their new home. Young people can also enjoy good continuity of care as they can move into the organisation's adult home. Placing authorities comment that children have 'excellent independent skills'. They highlight that children have 'improved leaps and bounds' enabling them to 'have real potential for semi-independent living. This was definitely not the case before the child's residence at MIG House'.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children benefit from a service which is continually evolving to meet their needs. The refurbishment programme is an excellent example of creating a purposeful child centred environment. Children benefit from a substantial range of new vibrant communal spaces that now include a quiet room, dark room, a computer room and a games room. The latter will include specialist games suitable for children with autism. Children will also benefit from a home cinema and computerised games consoles. Outdoors they will be able to enjoy an outdoor space with a sensory garden and summer house. Other areas within the home have been updated this includes a new state of the art kitchen, bathrooms and children's bedrooms.

Staff have high aspirations for children to reach their full potential. Professionals comment on the 'fantastic service' and the 'outstanding work' being undertaken. Placing authorities state staff 'are dedicated and have succeeded where others have failed in the past'. They highlight how the home supports children 'by identifying and supporting their individual needs despite the complexities that these may entail. Parents highlight that their children have changed 'for the better'. They thank the

home for 'saving our lives' and giving their children 'a new opportunity, which didn't look possible a few weeks ago'.

Children enjoy excellent relationships with staff and each other. Staff state that 'the children's home is not looked at as a children's home or as a job but instead looked at as a big family'. Children develop significant friendships enabling them to feel positive about being away from home. Children appreciate that staff are 'nice' and 'kind'. Staff promote a mutually respectful atmosphere where children's individuality is celebrated. Each child has a key worker who assists them to work on their personal goals. The home excels in their advocacy role and strongly promotes children's needs in professional arenas. Staff dynamically use the law to ensure decision making reflects children's best interests. Staff training in mental capacity and deprivation of liberty is a prime example of legislation influencing practice.

Children benefit from the exceptional partnership working between the home and their educational establishments. This contributes to their good outcomes and continuity of care, which helps them maximise their potential. Staff enhance children's learning through an extensive variety of ways. These include providing a homework room and using the latest information technology to engage in educational play. Staff exceed expectations by providing in-school support to enable children to access their preferred educational establishment. Children have 100% school attendance and are achieving educationally. There is both internal and external recognition of children's achievements. This further contributes towards children's improved self-belief and self-esteem.

Children have an extensive means of expression through the home's introduction of total communication. Symbols are on display throughout the home which helps inform and assists in the familiarisation of their environment. Children create personalised signs with staff to preserve their privacy and dignity. Children are able to confidently express their feelings, dreams and wishes through writing and using pictorial aids. The use of these aids in key work meetings proactively promotes their choices and self-expression. The home's consultation system empowers children. Their views actively affect decision making and children take a key role in chairing house meetings. During these meetings they contribute towards activity and menu planning. They were also highly influential in the home's refurbishment, helping to design the kitchen and choosing the décor for their rooms. They also share their thoughts and feelings through daily interactions, questionnaires and key work sessions.

Children benefit from outstanding individualised support, which takes into account their personality traits. Excellent care planning is centred on improving children's life chances. The person centred care planning system empowers children to self define their needs and unique strengths. Plans comprehensively detail each child's diverse needs and take into account their gender, disability, race, culture, religion, sexuality, dietary, communication and behavioural needs. Care is culturally sensitive and there is exceptional promotion of their specific needs. A very good example of this is joint

work undertaken with the school regarding sexuality.

The robust reviewing system highlights children's progress. Social workers highlight their immense satisfaction with the progress reports. Extensive photographic evidence demonstrates the inspiring impact the service is having on each child's life.

Children benefit from the home's promotion of all aspects of their well-being. Staff manage a wide range of health conditions and receive specialist training. Health initiatives encourage children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children learn the importance of good nutrition. The home provides an extensive range of international and culturally reflective cuisine. Menus take into account personal preferences and specific needs. Exercise is part of each child's weekly routine. They regularly enjoy going rock climbing, swimming, walking and going to the activity centre. Staff support children to successfully lose excess weight and take pride in their appearance. Staff support children to care for their skin and hair using culturally appropriate products.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Safeguarding arrangements are generally sound; however, the home does have shortfalls in relation to their staff recruitment and sanction recording. The home could not provide written evidence that disclosure and barring checks had been undertaken prior to starting employment. The registered manager stated documentation had been misplaced. They assured that staff do not work unsupervised without the appropriate checks. Sanction records do not include the effectiveness of each disciplinary measure. Therefore the home is unable to evaluate whether sanctions are making a difference.

The home provides a place of safety for children who have experience of abuse and neglect. Staff succeed in providing holistic care within a safe environment. They also highlight abusive practices and ensure appropriate action is taken. Staff appropriately care for children on child protection plans and positively contribute to strategy meetings. All staff undertake regular safeguarding training, they demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding and state that they are 'confident' in their ability to manage allegations. The home has good links with the local authority's safeguarding personnel. This enables them to access relevant training and keep updated on issues. An example of this is the home having a champion to raise awareness on child sexual exploitation.

Children are not absent without authority, however, appropriate missing person's forms are available for each child. Children do not experience issues with bullying. There is a marked decrease in their socially unacceptable behaviour. Staff work well with children with challenging needs. They highlight their success is due to being 'very consistent with the way they work and having 'good rules and boundaries'.

Children highlight their improved behaviour stating they are 'a better person'. The home produces behaviour support plans, which all staff follow to promote consistent care. Children are occasionally restrained for their own safety. They tend, however, to respond well to positive reinforcement and redirection strategies. The home receives external commendation for their behaviour management strategies; an example of this is being asked to share methods with educational establishments.

Children receive protection from the home's health and safety practices. There is a good risk management system. The service regularly updates risk assessments for all aspects of safety. Risk assessments detail concerns, relating to each child. Specific safeguarding body maps are produced to record any marks or bruising. The home provides a secure and safe environment. Engineers regularly inspect the electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. Children efficiently participate in fire drills at various times of the day. Children benefit from pictorial complaints and missing person's guidance. Staff also undertake work with them regarding personal safety and child protection matters.

Leadership and management

good

Children benefit from strong management arrangements which include two deputy managers. There is an efficient understanding on the new regulations. This includes the appointment of a well-qualified independent visitor, updating documentation and ensuring practice reflects the new guidance. The home have an updated statement of purpose, the area regarding restraints, requires further information to fully comply with regulations. Leaders and managers consistently communicate high expectations and there is a strong determination to create an outstanding service. At the last inspection there were no requirements or recommendations. There is a good quality assurance system includes seeking views through questionnaires, regular regulation 33 visits and monitoring in accordance with regulation 34.

The Registered Manager has been in post since March 2012. They were previously registered as the manager approximately ten years ago. The Registered Manager has worked in social care since they left school starting initially as a support worker. This individual has approximately 15 years' experience of working with children. The Registered Manager has a relevant management qualification and is currently enrolled on a higher level leadership course. This individual is a vocational assessor, they also have qualifications in early years care and education and multimedia advocacy. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas requiring further action. The home's development plan efficiently highlights their vision for the service.

Children state that the Registered Manager is 'kind, bubbly and funny'. Staff describe the home's management as being 'brilliant', stating they have 'never had such a good manager'. They state 'that the manager is fantastic' and she is very hands on with the young people and joins in on activities'.

Children receive care from an effective, experienced, culturally diverse staff team. Staff state that they take 'massive pride' in their work. Staff feel they have a 'brilliant team and 'feel valued' and are able to positively use their initiative. The home competently equips staff to undertake their role, providing meaningful training, regular reflective supervision and productive staff meetings. Staff have their performance appraised on an annual basis; children successfully contribute to this process. Professional comment that it is 'a pleasure to work' with staff. They highlight that staff have 'gone out of their way' to accommodate needs and they are 'so impressed with the support'.

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.