

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066120
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Leeds City Council
Registered person address	Leeds City Council, Department of Education 110 Merrion Centre LEEDS LS2 8DT
Responsible individual	Stephen Banks Walker
Registered manager	William Martin Nealon
Date of last inspection	30/12/2013

Inspection date	11/09/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
-------------------	-------------

During their stays in the home young people receive a high standard of care from a committed and enthusiastic team of staff who have an excellent understanding of their complex needs. As a result young people make good progress overall from their individual starting points. They grow in confidence, their behaviour improves, they enjoy good health and they develop life skills. Young people are safe in the home because the arrangements for safeguarding them are extremely robust.

The manager and staff have a strong commitment to ensuring that young people enjoy their stays in the home and are able to achieve to their individual potential. Relatives and professionals report that they are confident that young people are safe and happy and they make positive comments about the way young people develop and progress.

Leadership of the home is effective and there is a clear commitment to ensuring that the home continues to develop and improve for the benefit of young people. The manager ensures that the care of young people is closely monitored and their welfare is promoted. The home has a good track of responding to issues that are raised in inspections or identified through management monitoring.

One recommendation has been made as a result of this inspection. This relates to one aspect of the manager's monitoring reports.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a local authority and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children. Children and young people who use the home have special educational needs, physical disabilities and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties. Care is mainly organised on a shared basis, with children and young people staying in the home for part of the week. Occasionally children and young people can stay for longer depending on their needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
30/12/2013	Interim	good progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
08/11/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/06/2012	Full	adequate

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the reports of the manager's monitoring of care in the home evidence the consultation that has taken place with young people, relatives and professionals. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people benefit from being cared for in a warm and nurturing environment and as a result they make good progress in all aspects of their development from their individual starting points. They enjoy their stays in the home and their confidence grows over time. They learn how to socialise with others and they gradually develop life skills. Professionals and relatives confirm that young people are happy in the home and that they make good progress.

Young people enjoy good health. Their specific health needs are thoroughly assessed before they come to stay in the home and effective plans ensure that they are met. Young people have a healthy lifestyle. They eat well balanced diets and take regular exercise through involvement in recreational activities and play.

Young people go to school very regularly, generally achieving 100% attendance when they stay in the home. This high level of engagement with education maximises their opportunity to achieve and as a result young people are able to reach their individual education targets.

Young people live with their families, staying in the home for part of each week. These arrangements support young people and their families, while ensuring that young people maintain a clear sense of their own identity. Families are encouraged to keep in touch with their children when they stay at the home. They report that they feel welcomed by staff if they visit and that staff make sure that they are fully informed about their child's stay.

Young people communicate their wishes and feelings in a variety of different ways. For example, some young people use communication aids such as picture exchange systems and simple signing. Other young people make their views known through facial expressions and gestures. Staff have an excellent knowledge of how individual young people communicate and they help young people to make choices in all areas of their lives. This supports young people's sense of achievement.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people benefit from the extremely high standard of care they receive from staff. Care staff are committed, enthusiastic about their work and have an excellent knowledge of the individual and complex needs of the young people they look after. Staff speak very positively about the young people in their care and they respond to and value them as individuals. Relationships between staff and young people are very strong. All staff have high aspirations for the young people they look after and

they encourage young people to reach their maximum potential. Young people's achievements in all areas of their lives are celebrated. This empowers young people. The level of trust young people have with staff means they feel safe and protected. This is visible in the caring interaction between staff and young people from the moment young people arrive in the home.

Care packages are carefully thought out and individualised to meet the specific and complex needs of the young people who stay in the home. Comprehensive care plans reflect every aspect of young people's care and developmental needs, including those arising from their culture, background and religion, as well their disabilities. Plans identify specific and measurable outcomes and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant to the young person's emerging needs.

Staff are keen to ensure that young people are able to express their views about every aspect of their care. Communication difficulties are creatively overcome through a number of non-verbal communication tools. For example, a consultation document 'Getting out and about' has recently been developed. This has simple questions and is supported by colourful symbols and pictures to support young people's understanding. Staff also incorporate photographs of young people into this record to reflect the choices they have made and the activities they are involved in.

Staff work closely with relatives and professionals from other agencies, such as social workers, community nurses, child and adolescent psychology services and education staff. This effective partnership working ensures that young people experience consistency and have access to all the services they need to support their progress.

Professionals and relatives make many positive comments about the way young people are cared for. For example a social worker said 'Staff understand children's needs well and respond to them on an individual basis' and a parent said 'Staff are very welcoming, exceptionally nice caring people'.

The home's medication procedures are extremely robust thus ensuring that young people are protected and have medicines when they need them.

Due to the shared care arrangements in the home, young people's parents maintain overall responsibility for their education. However, staff work closely with them and schools to ensure that young people are enabled to achieve to their individual potential. They attend education meetings and have information in the home about young people's education plans. Consequently, they understand young people's targets and can work effectively with parents and schools to help young people to achieve them.

The home is appropriately located and is maintained to a very good standard. It provides young people with a suitable environment in which to stay and sufficient space to allow them to spend time alone or in groups, according to their wishes and needs. Young people's rooms are furnished and decorated to reflect their personal

needs and tastes. Where they feel it is in their child's best interests, families are able to decorate their bedrooms to mirror young people's rooms at home. This provides a sense of continuity for those young people and helps them to feel settled in the home. Young people have access to a large garden which is safely enclosed and to a range of play equipment that they can use inside or out.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

There are extremely effective arrangements in place to ensure that young people are safeguarded during their stay. Staff have an excellent awareness of safeguarding issues, in particular issues that may affect young people with disabilities. Training in safeguarding is regularly refreshed and staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the home's safeguarding policy. This means that they understand how to report and manage child protection concerns in order to keep young people safe. Staff are vigilant and take suitable action to promote young people's safety. They follow safe care protocols when they support children with personal care, managing this sensitively and promoting young people's dignity and their right to privacy. There is a clear whistle blowing policy which staff understand and report that they would follow. Professionals and relatives report that they are very confident that young people are cared for safely.

Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual vulnerabilities. These are identified in a range of detailed individual plans and risk assessments. These plans, together with excellent communication within the team, promote consistency in the way staff care for and protect young people. Plans show how staff support young people in order to ensure that hazards are minimised and young people are kept safe. Individual crisis management plans are also put in place for young people. These are developed in consultation with other professionals involved with young people. They identify situations that young people might find difficult or any behaviours of concern and the strategies that staff employ to distract and re-direct young people in positive ways. Staff work very effectively with young people who are frustrated or distressed to defuse situations before they escalate. Consequently, staff do not need to restrain young people to keep them and others safe. This results in less stressful situations for young people.

Young people do not go missing. They are appropriately supervised when they are in the home and out on activities and they do not leave the building without the knowledge of staff. Bullying is not an issue.

Young people are protected by the home's robust staff recruitment policies and practices. These ensure that all new staff are thoroughly vetted and assessed as suitable before they start work. Staff check the identity of all visitors before allowing them into the home. This also protects young people from unsuitable individuals who may try to gain access to the home.

Young people benefit from staying in a home that is kept safe and free from hazards. The equipment is routinely checked and serviced and staff monitor the environment regularly to ensure that it is safe. Robust risk assessments identify possible hazards and these are either eliminated or reduced. Each young person has a personal evacuation plan. This records how they should be helped to leave the home in an emergency. Staff practise emergency evacuations with young people to ensure that they can be safely supported from the home.

Leadership and management

good

The home is managed effectively. The manager has National Vocational Qualifications at level 4 in care and management. He has a number of years experience in residential child care, including managing children's homes and is registered with Ofsted. He keeps up to date with changes in legislation and ensures that this information is shared with staff to maintain their knowledge. The manager provides good leadership to the staff team and is effectively supported by senior care staff who ensure that the home continues to run smoothly in his absence.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent and competent team of staff. Staff are qualified and have good training opportunities. This includes specialist health training to ensure they have the skills to manage individual young people's medical needs.

Staff report that they feel they are well supported in their work. They have regular supervision, which they feel is meaningful. Frequent team meetings and handovers at the start of every shift, ensure that there is good communication within the staff team. This supports staff in their care of young people. Morale within the team is high.

Robust management monitoring arrangements ensure that there is good oversight of the care that is given to young people and the progress they make. These include monthly visits from a person who is independent of the home, as well as routine checks undertaken by the manager. There is regular consultation with young people, relatives and professionals. However, the manager's reports do not yet reflect the outcome of such consultation nor how this is being used to drive improvements. The manager takes prompt action to address any issue that is identified through the monitoring process.

The requirement and recommendations made at the last inspection have all been addressed. Copies of the independent visitor's reports have been submitted to Ofsted as required by the regulations. These reports demonstrate that the independent person has evaluated the quality of care in the home and the progress young people make. The manager has produced a plan that identifies how the home is resourced and how he intends to continue to improve the outcomes for young people.

The Statement of Purpose contains very clear information about routines and care in the home. It is made available to placing authorities and relatives so that they can see how children are cared for. The home works effectively to meet the aims and objectives set out in this document. The young person's guide provides clear information about the home. It is written in a format of symbols and simple language that is appropriate to the specific needs of the young people who stay there.

Staff keep detailed records about young people. These are stored securely to protect young people's right to confidentiality. Files contain information about young people's past and present circumstances and consequently contribute to an understanding of their life. Staff share information with young people in a format that is appropriate to their needs and their understanding so that their views can be incorporated into their records.

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.