

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 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 children's home provides a responsive residential respite care service for children with severe learning disabilities, some of whom have complex and challenging behaviours. A shared care service is also available. In an emergency they provide short-term residential care to children whose families require support. Children continue to attend school for education during their stay.

Summary

The focus for the care inspection of young people is upon the 25 key national minimum standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcomes for children and young people. The two recommendations made on the last inspection in February 2009 have also been checked to see if they have been implemented.

Young people took part in this inspection.

The home promotes well a healthy lifestyle for young people by providing healthy eating and liaising with health care professionals when required. The safe administration and storage of medication is robustly monitored within the home. Young people's safety is a priority. There are clear and detailed safety measures in place to ensure this happens. Staff demonstrate how they keep young people safe. There are good links with education professionals to support young people which builds on them making further progress in their lives. The home has a wealth of toys, games and equipment. This gives great opportunities for them to play and socialise with their peers. The home is furnished and equipped to a good standard. The staffing levels provided reflect and meet the needs of young people.

There are some deficiencies in incorporating relevant individual education targets and clearly setting out behaviour strategies within the care plans of individual young people. Although, some consultation is taking place with young people, there are shortfalls in this area.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The following recommendations have been implemented since the last inspection:

All risk assessments have been reviewed and additional information included which gives staff the precaution measures identified to enable staff to reduce or eliminate the risks identified for young people. Staff are receiving supervision on a regular basis and the manager is monitoring this area closely.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A well balanced and nutritious diet is provided in the home and the menus reflect this. Young people's preferences, likes and dislikes are incorporated into the planning and cooking of meals. Diverse meal options are included in the menu. At the tea time meal young people made their

own choices from the two options available. The cook said if young people do not like any of the two main meals cooked, another meal is provided.

The responsibility for the overall health care needs of the children remains with the parents, as the children only spend a few nights each month at the home. However, the health needs of young people are identified, services accessed and provided when required to ensure that their health is well promoted and maintained.

Staff are trained in first aid and on how to administer medication safely. The administration, recording and storage of medicines and treatments are provided safely to the young people through the home's policies, procedures and practices of staff. This area is monitored and audited frequently. This ensures the medication of over twenty children using the respite service is correct and safely administered. This thoroughness is commended.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The young people's privacy is respected and staff demonstrate a clear understanding of confidentiality. The young people have their own rooms and they can choose to spend time in their rooms. Staff knock on bedroom doors before entering. Staff speak to young people with respect, asking what they would like to do, eat for tea and within general conversation.

Staff demonstrate well their responsibilities to protect children from harm and they promote the children's welfare well.

The home has a clear policy and procedure on how to make a complaint which includes the Ofsted contact details. The staff, parents and some young people are aware of the complaints procedure. One complaint has been made since the last inspection. Records show that prompt action is taken and the full outcome for the complaint is recorded in line with the regulation. This demonstrates that concerns raised are taken seriously.

All staff have received safeguarding training and they demonstrate an understanding of the procedures. The procedures are detailed and available for staff to refer to and use. Therefore, measures are put in place to keep young people safe and their welfare is promoted.

Young people are protected from bullying through the home's policies, procedures and the practice of the staff. There is a child friendly anti-bullying policy that has been developed by the children.

Keeping young people safe is a very important. There is a policy available and procedures to follow if children go missing and information is kept on children's files, to assist if this occurs. There have been two incidents where a young person has managed to climb over the fence of the garden but staff have been in attendance.

Managing behaviour positively is a high priority in the home and it is promoted and encouraged consistently by the staff team. Staff's approach to caring for young people is to have boundaries and positively reinforce good behaviour.

The staff are trained in care and control, which includes safe physical intervention methods. The staff rarely restrain young people and it is used as a last resort, which is good practice.

There has been no restraint incidents since the last inspection. The sanctions made are agreed with parents and appropriate to the child's understanding. However, since the last inspection there have been none given. When sanctions are given to young people they are usually a few minutes 'time out' for the child to think about their behaviour.

The home provides good physical safety and security. For example, fire records indicate that regular checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction and training have taken place. Fire drills have been conducted on a regular basis and involve the young people and staff. Risk assessments are in place for young people, which cover the relevant areas in specific detail and the supporting safety measures to be implemented with young people to keep them safe. These have been reviewed and updated since the last inspection.

Health and safety areas within the home are monitored on a regular basis to ensure appropriate measures are in place to keep young people safe. Therefore, young people's safety is enhanced through the practices and support from staff.

There are robust vetting and recruitment procedures for staff in place. This ensures young people are prevented from being cared for by unsuitable staff. The recruitment files contain all the required information and relevant checks on the person are undertaken, including the Criminal Record Bureau checks, references and a full employment history. The files are audited annually by the manager to ensure any omissions are identified and addressed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The young people receive individual support from the staff, and some professionals when they need it, to assist them to make progress in their lives. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of children's individual needs, being aware of each young person's learning disability and other conditions. They have links with some health care and education professionals.

Education is actively promoted by staff. All children attend school on a full time basis and this assists in them attaining their educational potential. Staff indicate that the young people's education is very important. They have regular communication with the schools and they attend school reviews. Each child has a personal education plan (PEP) that identifies their needs. However, some relevant education target from the PEP are not always incorporated into the home's care plan.

Young people are encouraged and supported well by staff to pursue activities. This develops their confidence, builds on their self esteem and enjoyment of their stay at the home. There is a wide selection of toys, games and outdoor play equipment for children to use. Each young person chose what they wished to do before and after tea. For example, jigsaws, computer games, football, playing on the swing, building bricks, going to the shop. The home has a mini bus which the young people use to access activities in the community on a regular basis. Young people said they enjoy visiting the home, they have lots of things they can do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are assessed by the staff and supporting professionals. This is documented within individual plans of care. These outline what their needs are and how they will be met

and implemented. Staff demonstrate how they provide care for young people. Care plans have been reviewed to ensure they are current and are being implemented to support the young person moving positively forward in their life. However, behaviour strategies for some individual young people are not always clearly set out in care plans. This does not ensure all staff are clear on how behaviour should be addressed to ensure consistency.

Regular care reviews take place and the young people are positively involved. Young people and parents attend their review and their views are sort on the future planning of their lives. Statutory review minutes are on the case files. This shows young people's progress is being monitored and built upon.

There is regular contact between parents and staff. As the children are accommodated for respite care the staff use a communication book. This is completed at every visit and sent home to the parents. There is also regular phone contact to discuss how children are prior to a visit to the home.

Young people are involved in decision-making and they are provided with opportunities to make positive contributions to their own lives. There are positive relationships and good communication between young people and the staff. They interact together well, about how their day has been and what they would like to do whilst at the home. A young person said they like the staff and enjoy their stay. They are involved in making decisions about the food they eat, activities and plans for their future. However, only three young people's meetings are recorded as taking place since April which is minimal.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The accommodation is decorated and furnished to a good standard, providing a positive environment for the young people to live in. It is spacious with a number of communal rooms for the young people to use, including a computer, ball pool and sensory rooms. There are good outside facilities for play and recreation. The home is clean and tidy. There are good repair and maintenance programmes in place. Bedrooms are well equipped with a good range of furniture. Two young people said they like their bedroom. However, the flooring and seals in a shower room and bathroom are discoloured, showing signs of wear and tear.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A statement of purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a good children's guide which is in a suitable format for young people. Before admission the staff provide information about the home to young people and their parents so that they know what to expect when they come to stay there.

Staff said that they work well as a team and this benefits young people and assists in providing a good standard of care. They spoke about their work with young people with enthusiasm and commitment. There is a diverse and consistent staff team with a broad range of skills and experience amongst its members. They are well supported and guided by the manager in promoting young people's welfare. Staff are receiving formal supervision at regular intervals and the manager is monitoring this area. There are regular staff meetings and shift handovers.

There are good staffing levels to support young people. The manager worked a day shift and the afternoon shift was worked by four staff residential care workers to care of five young people.

The target of 80 per cent of the work force of achieving the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in caring for children and young people has been met. Staff have access to a good selection of training in other current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people.

The staff have a good knowledge of the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided. Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans.

Monthly monitoring visits to check how care is provided, are undertaken. Further monitoring is undertaken by the manager and the senior staff team, which contributes to a good monitoring system. This ensures the young people living at the home are well cared for, with the national minimum standards and the regulations being met.

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 relevant education targets are incorporated into care plans where appropriate (NMS14)
- ensure clear written behaviour strategies are in place for young people where required (NMS2 & 22)
- further develop methods of consultation with young people (NMS8)
- ensure the flooring and seals in shower and bathrooms are in good order. (NMS24)