

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC067753
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	West Sussex County Council
Registered person address	West Sussex County Council, Director of Social Services County Hall, Tower Street CHICHESTER West Sussex PO19 1QT
Responsible individual	Annie MacIver
Registered manager	Dominic Stephen Riches
Date of last inspection	12/02/2014

Inspection date	14/11/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The service is good at ensuring young people enjoy their breaks. Young people have some excellent relationships with staff and effective planning for care and activities ensures stays for young people are as enjoyable as possible. Staff have formed effective relationships with parents, carers and a range of external professionals, ensuring a consistent and caring approach, based on individual needs. These close working relationships encourage positive transitions between home, school and the service. Parents are positive about the service and confident in staff skills to keep their child safe while enjoying a range of activities.

The service seeks the views of young people through comprehensive consultation books, a suggestion box and through staff's keen observations of individuals likes and dislikes. As a result new play equipment has been sourced and activities tailored to individual needs. Parents mostly have contact with staff when they collect their child or through communication books. Additionally regular telephone calls provide further detail, particularly for young people who use the service for extended periods.

The Registered Manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and is keen to continually improve young people's experiences and care provided. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been met. New requirements

and recommendations as a result of this inspection include refurbishing a bathroom; making provision for fire doors to be held open by appropriate means and improving clarity records of complaints and safeguarding investigations, among others.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and support for a maximum of 16 children and children with complex needs. The home can accommodate children and children with both physical and learning disabilities, some of whom may display challenging behaviour. The home can provide permanent placements or short breaks.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
16/05/2013	Full	good
18/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
19/07/2012	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
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic monitoring devices for surveillance are only used where the following conditions are met; the placing authority consents to the use of the measure; it is provided for in the child's placement plan; so far as practicable in the light of his age and understanding, the child in question is informed in advance of the intention to use the measure (Regulation 22(1)(a)(b)(c))	31/12/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are of sound construction and kept in good	31/12/2014

	structural repair externally and internally and kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(2)(d)(e))	
32 (2001)	ensure the registered person, after consultation with the fire and rescue authority, takes adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment and provides adequate means of escape, with specific regard to appropriate means to hold internal doors open. (Regulation 32(1)(a)(b))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home does not restrict the liberty of any child as a matter of routine. This is with specific regard to young people being able to unlock their bedroom doors from the inside and behaviour plans stating to hold doors shut, including in the case of emergency interventions (NMS 3.19)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment. This is with specific regard to the storage of items in bathrooms (NMS 10.3)
- conduct telephone enquiries as well as obtaining written references for all staff (NMS 16.1)
- ensure records are clear, with specific regard to complaints and child protection investigations (NMS 22)
- ensure records of restraint and sanctions are in formats that can not be tampered with after the event, so that they cannot be amended at a later date. With specific regards to binding that is secure and cannot be opened and pages removed or replaced. (Vol. 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.91 footnote 13)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress when accessing the service. They develop improved confidence through engaging in a range of new activities. Young people develop greater independence, self-care and other practical skills in addition to learning to spend time away from their families. Regular evaluation of young people's successes ensures they are progressing in line with their short breaks plans. Close liaison with parents and educational professionals leads to consistency in goal setting and supporting young people to succeed.

Young people's health and wellbeing needs are met well during their stays. Excellent joint working with nurses and paediatricians produce comprehensive health care plans. As a result, young people have continuity in health care and gain an understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Attendance at local schools is excellent and young people achieve in line with their peers. Additionally those struggling in education have bespoke packages including extra activities in the service during school days. Strong links with education professionals promotes continuity in life skills planning and planning for future placements.

Young people are supported to share their views on the service and to effect change. Individual consultation booklets and responses to requests have led to new toys and activities being made available for young people. Young people have the opportunity to form and maintain friendships while using the service. Those who struggle with peers are accommodated with extra living space. Changes in relationships and behaviours are recognised and bedrooms moved or groups visiting rearranged.

Parents are positive about the service and say their children feel safe during their breaks. Young people experience a positive presence in the local community and engage in a variety of activities, including trips to coffee shops and trips to the park and seafront. Additionally there is a wide range of activities within the service, including arts and crafts, a sensory room and a well-resourced soft play area.

Quality of care **good**

Young people are cared for to a good standard during their stays at the service. They benefit from positive relationships with staff who focus on individual's needs. Parents are positive about the care their children receive and say staff know their children well. Short breaks plans reflect needs as agreed with parents, medical professionals and other relevant parties. They are incredibly comprehensive and include how to meet individual's physical, behavioural and emotional needs. Young people are cared for consistently and enjoy experience individualised support and boundaries in a

caring environment. Staff understand various communication styles, ensuring all young people are understood and able to communicate their views.

Staff are concerned for individual's wellbeing and welfare. Positive handling plans are entrenched in daily practice, encouraging young people to move on from unwanted patterns of behaviour. Regular reviews of all plans identify whether the frequency of visits remains appropriate, and that short breaks plans are reflective young people's changing needs. Hand overs between teams and effective shift planning enables young people to participate in activities they enjoy with staff who are best suited to meet their needs.

All young people attend education reflective of their needs and abilities. Robust communication between schools and the service lead to greater consistency and smooth transitions between environments. Communication books and telephone calls ensure parents are fully informed of their child's stay. Some parents commented this does always happen. Close liaison with the organisations learning disability nurse and regular contact with paediatrician, occupational and speech and language therapists ensure staff are skilled in meeting individual health needs. The use of listening devices to further protect young people's health needs is not included in individual care plans, nor does the service have formal permission for their use from parents and social workers. Medication is stored appropriately and there is an extremely robust monitoring system to ensure safety when receiving, administering and returning medication. In case of emergency, there are several qualified first aiders within the service at all times.

The building is purpose built with many areas for group and independent interaction. It is well resourced with play equipment for individual tastes and needs and there is a large, well equipped garden. The building is generally well maintained, although one bathroom is in a state of disrepair with mould and the bath is panel is broken. Rows of pegs with towels are a health and safety concern due to cross contamination. It is also institutional in appearance. Other bathrooms within the service are clean, well maintained and have modern specialist bathing equipment to meet young people's physical needs. Young people are able to accessorise their bedrooms and bring favourite items from home during their stay. They use the same bedrooms for visits and those with larger care packages have their own bedrooms that other young people do not use.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people's demeanour shows they are comfortable in the environment and parents say their children feel safe while using the service. Young people identify staff they can go to if they are anxious or upset. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual's vulnerabilities and do all they can to protect them from abuse or harm. Staff are aware of safeguarding processes to follow should they be concerned for any aspect of young people's welfare or safety. Investigations into

safeguarding and child protection concerns are thorough and in conjunction with appropriate external agencies. Records of investigations, while complete, are confusing in their recording.

Young people do not go missing from care and have staff with them at all times in the community. Locks to external doors are risk assessed as necessary to safeguard young people. However, internal locks on bedroom doors do not all allow young people freedom to leave their bedrooms if the door is locked from the outside. Managers and staff within the home are adamant this is not used as a behaviour management tool. There are no reported incidents of bullying and staff are vigilant to any issues within peer relationships.

Individualised positive behaviour and handling plans promote and reward appropriate behaviour. Diversion and calming tactics are used, including agreed approaches such as a designated 'calming stool' for a young person to relax and time away from others in the soft play, as examples. Restraint is used on occasions as a last resort and mostly to prevent young people harming themselves or others. There have been two incidents where staff have held a door shut to prevent a young person leaving an area. This was to ensure staff could make the area safe, by removing objects that could be used as projectiles. Plans are clear this is not a strategy to be used in the future and calming equipment, such as a foam roller have been purchased for the young person to use when extremely unsettled or distressed. Young people's views are recorded after incidents and records have a good level of management oversight. The binding of the restraint and sanctions records is not tamper evident and the pages are loose in the books.

Young people are mostly protected from fire, accidents and other hazards as a result of thorough checks and procedures. Many doors within the building have magnetic door holders to encourage access and mobility, while remaining safe. However doors to some bedrooms and communal areas do not have these and are being propped open with inappropriate items such as chairs. The location assessment completed in conjunction with other professionals highlights potential risks the local community poses and how staff will reduce young people's exposure to the identified concern.

The organisation's recruitment practice potentially puts young people at risk. References have not been consistently verified by telephone for authenticity. Therefore the process is not robust at reducing risk of unsuitable people having contact with vulnerable young people using the service.

Leadership and management

good

The manager was registered with Ofsted in November 2012 and holds an appropriate level 4 qualification in management for children's care services. The Registered Manager has a good understanding of the services' strengths and weaknesses and is seeking to improve the service provided to young people and their families.

Staff have a sound understanding of the aims and objectives of the service, which reflect the Statement of Purpose. Staff are effective in their roles and ensure anti-discriminatory practice is central to their work. The young people's guide is clear and adaptable to individual communication styles.

The management team effectively run the service and have increasingly clear oversight in all areas. Independent monitoring under Regulation 33 and managers monthly monitoring identify areas for improvement and development. The development plan for the service is simple and time limited, including many areas noted as requiring development during the inspection.

The organisation seeks the views of young people, their families and social workers in the annual service level report. Further consultation through suggestion boxes, targeted work booklets and observations highlight young people's views of the service and what equipment, activities and foods they would like to have available to them. Parents and carers views are sought informally through telephone calls and emails and comments often come via thank you cards. There have been no complaints from the local community. Complaints from parents and carers are responded to promptly, although records are not always clear as to whether issues are resolved to their satisfaction.

The mostly consistent staff team care for young people in an enthusiastic manner. The service uses regular agency staff and train and supervise them in line with the regular staff team. Communication across shifts is usually good, although the set working teams do lead to some inconsistencies across shifts. Newly appointed staff undertake an induction specific to the service and in line with national standards. Staff have access to continued training opportunities alongside mandatory training. Annual appraisals identify areas for further training and development. Progress is monitored through regular supervision. Staff are mostly positive about their roles and demonstrate a clear commitment to providing rewarding breaks for young people.

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.