

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372511
Inspector	Ceri Evans
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Registered person address	Blackburn With Darwen Borough Council, Town Hall King William Street BLACKBURN BB1 7DY
Responsible individual	Karen Elizabeth Barrick
Registered manager	Melanie Lisa Cogan
Date of last inspection	28/02/2014

Inspection date	15/10/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
-------------------	--------------------

The home is making a positive difference to the lives of young people. The delivery of care is highly individualised and as a result children and young people are making significant progress. A strength of the home is the warm and affectionate relationships between staff and young people. Young people appear happy, settled and enjoy their time in the home. This impacts positively on their confidence, self-esteem and ability to relax and have fun during their visit.

Parents, carers and stakeholder comment extremely highly about the quality of the service. They say that staff provide a positive and enriching experience for young people. Some of their comments include 'my child loves going and is always excited to go' and 'this is a place where my child feels secure and is well looked after'. This further demonstrates the high standard of care young people receive during their short break.

Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of safe working practices and take full account of children and young people's vulnerabilities, needs and challenging behaviour associated with a disability. As a result, children and young people are well protected from harm. Staff are dedicated to their role and demonstrate real commitment to ensuring that young people meet their full potential.

The home has strong leadership and management arrangements. The manager is driven to continually develop the service and strives to make improvements in the interest of young people. There have been no breaches of regulations and two good practice recommendations made as part of this inspection. The recommendations made have not impacted negatively on the safety and welfare of children and young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short breaks care for up to five young people at any one time, who have a range of disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/02/2014	Interim	good progress
17/10/2013	Full	good
21/02/2013	Interim	good progress
29/08/2012	Full	good

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):

- there is a good quality learning & development programme which staff are supported to undertake. This specifically relates to ensuring that all training is correctly recorded in staff files. NMS 18.1
- There is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. This specifically related to ensuring that all records are completed within the necessary timescales. NMS22.1

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people thoroughly enjoy their short breaks and have a lot of fun during their stay. They benefit from a warm, comfortable and stimulating environment where they feel safe and secure. Young people are truly excited about their visit and share extremely positive relationships with staff. One parent commented 'my child cannot wait to get in through the door, he thoroughly enjoys his visits and is totally relaxed and happy'. This demonstrates that young people feel settled and content during their short breaks.

Young people with specific communication needs use tools and systems suited to their individual ability, such as symbols and sign. Every effort is made by staff to communicate effectively with young people and careful consideration is given to identifying the most appropriate method. As a result, young people engage confidently with staff and are able to express their wishes and feelings that are listened and responded to appropriately.

Young people make choices in all aspects of their lives, despite having limited verbal communication. They are encouraged to make choices about what they would like to eat, what they would like to do and have a say about the care they receive. Consequently, young people enjoy greater sense of control over their lives which has had a positive impact on their behaviour.

Education remains the primary responsibility of parents or carers. Nevertheless, young people continue to access education during their visit. This ensures minimal disruption to their routine. Young people are supported in all aspects of their education. For example homework is communicated via daily diaries and staff support and assist young people with completing this. The home maintains close liaison with the young person's education provision and regularly attend education meetings and statement reviews. This promotes continuity, consistency and a holistic approach to young people's education.

Young people benefit further from the learning opportunities created within the home. For example, they are supported to learn new skills, such as shopping, preparing meals and personal care. This enables young people to learn new skills and build on existing abilities. Consequently, young people are more confident and have real pride in their achievements.

Young people experience a range of leisure activities and enjoy opportunities within the home and wider community. Emphasis is placed on identifying activities that promote young people's confidence, social skills and communication. For example the home has excellent links with the local Youth Zone and some young people are taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. This involves overnight expeditions and

some volunteering in the community. These opportunities enable young people to pursue interests, try new things and develop greater life skills and self-esteem.

Quality of care

outstanding

An extremely committed and confident staff team provide excellent standard of care to complex and vulnerable young people. Staff work hard to create a warm atmosphere where young people can relax, have fun and achieve. Staff are extremely dedicated, have high aspirations and offer a service based on warmth, nurture and mutual respect. As a result, young people thoroughly enjoy well established, meaningful and trusting relationships with staff and each other.

Care planning is undertaken in conjunction with parents, health, education and social care professionals. Plans are highly individualised and provide details regarding specific health conditions, likes, dislikes, behaviours and risks. The team demonstrate strong and effective partnerships with relevant people, provide regular progress updates and attend review meetings when necessary. Staff prepare detailed reports prior to reviews and contribute fully in planning meetings. Reports highlight a thorough overview of young people's experiences in the home and provide a meaningful account of their short breaks experience. This supports communication between relevant agencies and promotes a holistic approach to care planning.

Young people contribute their views and opinions in a variety of ways. Some are able to work through their communication passports while others use sign of symbols. While it is unusual for young people to complain, staff are alert to signs of unhappiness and would act immediately to resolve the matter.

Parents, carers and social workers say that staff are excellent at listening and gathering suggestions on how to improve the service and provide consistently high quality care for young people. The home uses a range of methods to gather the views of others including feedback forms and consultation reports. Also, the home holds regular training events for parents, support groups and consultation meetings,. This promotes inclusion and supports collaborative relationships. Consequently, parents, carers and stakeholders remain confident in the service the home provides and the difference it is making to the lives of young people.

Staff are extremely committed, enthusiastic and offer an integrated service that supports the whole family. Young people, parents and carers receive regular 'Newsflash' magazine that keeps them up to date with changes or upcoming events. Young people and their families are invited to take part in a wide range of activities such as youth clubs, sensory schemes, parents group and a 'drop in' service is available daily should parents need to seek support or advice. This means young people and their families have greater accessibility to the service and can enjoy the

range of support available to them.

The home is a homely, safe and a stimulating environment where young people can maximise their potential. The home is maintained to a high standard and young people have benefitted greatly from the recent bedroom refurbishment and new sensory room. This provides young people with new sensory experiences that they enjoy.

Staff are enthusiastic and work hard to make sure that young people have a happy and fulfilling stay. The house is well designed and fully equipped to meet the specific needs of young people. Photographs, memorabilia and other visual tools are displayed around the home. This helps young people maintain their identity, settle in and feel at home during their stay.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young people appear safe and happy during their visit. Parents confirmed that they have every confidence in homes ability to keep their children safe during their stay. Social workers comment extremely highly about the care and attention that staff give young people to ensure that their safety and wellbeing remains paramount at all times.

Staff have exceptional safe caring practices and ensure that vulnerable young people are protected. Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of safeguarding young people with complex needs. For example, they demonstrate high levels of competence when delivering personal and intimate care to young people. This ensures that young people's dignity, health and wellbeing are attended to sensitively, safely and respectfully.

High staffing ratios ensure young people are appropriately supervised and supported during their stay. Staff attend training and fully understand the vulnerabilities of disabled children. They demonstrate a sound knowledge base of safeguarding protocols and are alert to any emotional or physical changes in young people that may indicate they have suffered harm. Staff are consistently clear about what action they would take in response to any arising concerns. This further demonstrates that staff give the safety and well-being of young people the highest priority at all times.

Young people are given excellent support or are redirected should they start to show increased levels of anxiety. Staff are highly attuned to individual needs of young people and are particularly skilful in recognising triggers. They take immediate action to prevent escalation of incidents where a young person becomes upset or frustrated. This means that young people are protected from harm and are supported when they experience discomfort or distress and physical restraint is not used unless absolutely necessary.

Records and risk assessments take full account of young people's triggers and clearly highlight strategies on how to manage known risks. Plans are reviewed and updated in response to incidents and robust communication within the team ensures that everyone is made aware of presenting issues and concerns. In general, risk assessments are to a high standard and are clear, legible and robust. However, records are not consistently completed within timescales and are not signed by staff to evidence they have read and understood what is expected of them. For example, incident logs have not been completed prior to the end of the working day and staff signatures are not present on risk assessments. Nevertheless, to date, this has had no negative impact on the welfare and safety of young people.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secure. Young people are protected from harm through effective health and safety checks, risk assessments and comprehensive policy and procedures. Any areas of potential risk are quickly identified through robust monitoring and acted upon in a timely manner. For example, the installation of a front door alarm to alert staff that visitors have entered the building. These measures further enhance the security of the building creating a safer environment for young people.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager demonstrates a strong commitment to the young people in her care. She was registered with Ofsted in July 2011, holds the relevant qualifications for her role and has over twenty year experience in social care.

Young people benefit from living in an effectively managed home. The manager is a creative and passionate leader who has made significant improvements in all aspect of the running of the home. For example, improvements in the administration, recording and safe storage of medication. This ensures that young people get the appropriate medication and more robust auditing reduces the risks of error.

The home has strong and robust partnerships with the police, Local Safeguarding Children's Board, social workers, education and health professionals. This ensures that young people's holistic needs are met, their wellbeing is protected and their safety is given optimum priority.

The Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and fully supports the aims and objectives of the home. The manager demonstrates a thorough overview of the provision and has a clear vision on how drive the service forward. For example, the home now has an established integrated service called The hub, a provision which offers joint service delivery with health and education. Parents can access drop in sessions and specialist workers undertake outreach work with families. This is an excellent example of how leaders and managers continually develop the service to ensure the needs of people and their families are met through greater access to the services and support on offer in the home.

The manager has a robust development plan in place that clearly identifies achievable goals. The plan is realistic, yet challenging and serves as a positive indicator that the manager is committed to driving the service forward. A location risk assessment has been completed to a high standard. The manager has consulted and collated the necessary information from partner agencies, such as the police and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. The document provides a detailed overview of potential risk and identifies strategies on how to manage these. This further protects young people from harm and demonstrates the homes commitment to ensuring safety and protection is given optimum consideration.

The home is well resourced and employs a sufficient number of suitably qualified, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. The manager and staff work exceptionally well as part of a team and provide each other with peer support and mentoring. This ensures that young people are cared for by skilled, knowledgeable and competent staff.

Staff receive quality supervision and update their knowledge base with regular training, workshops and conferences. Not all training events are accurately recorded on files which is a minor administration error and does not detract from the high level of knowledge and expertise within the team.

Young people's written records are well maintained, securely stored and provide a detailed picture of young people's needs, development and progress.

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.