

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC387148
Inspector	Chris Scully
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Steven Anthony Gibson
Date of last inspection	14/02/2014

Inspection date	14/01/2015
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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	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people thrive because they live in a supportive, caring and nurturing environment which enables them to make good progress. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and their peers. As a result they are safe and feel safe here.

The home makes a positive difference to young people's lives and provides them with the tools and opportunities to achieve very positive outcomes. For example, they are healthier, learn new skills, and develop better relationships with their families and the wider community. Care planning is individualised and ensures that the care provided supports young people and their families.

The 'voice' of the young people is at the heart of everything the home does. Staff are skilled at using various communication methods to ensure young people are consulted and listened to on all aspects of their care and activities. This means that young people develop in the way they wish and are empowered to take a greater role in any decisions made about them. They take part in a wide and creative range of activities and undertake projects which enable them to contribute to their local community.

The Registered Manager is currently on an extended leave of absence and the home is being overseen by a service manager. The home has not notified Ofsted of the changes to the management of the home or of the updated copy of the Statement of Purpose.

Minor shortfalls in some records such as, care plans and health care plan do not detract from the support provided to young people. Some areas of the home are looking tired and worn. Monitoring reports lack any real evaluation to help drive the home forward. The acting manager has taken immediate action to address the issues raised.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is a purpose-built property which provides residential care, shared care and respite care for up to five young people with autism, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities. The home is run by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2014	Interim	good progress
31/10/2013	Full	good
04/02/2013	Interim	good progress
10/07/2012	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
37 (2001)	ensure where the Registered Manager is absent from the home for a continuous period of 28 days or more, the registered person shall give notice in writing to Ofsted, which includes the reason for the absence, the arrangements in place for running the home, and the name, address and qualifications of the person in charge of the home during their absence (Regulation 37 (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d))	19/02/2015
5 (2001)	ensure Ofsted is notified of any revisions to the Statement of Purpose within 28 days. (Regulation 5(a))	19/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an effective system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed, with particular regards to risk assessments, care plans, the homes development plan, all records are correctly dated and to consider the use of the word absconding in records (NMS 22.1)
- ensure reports by the Registered Manager and the independent person into the records kept by the home identify any concerns about specific incidents patterns and trends and the action taken to address these issues (NMS 21.2)
- ensure young people's health is promoted in accordance with their placement plan and in particular that health care plans are sufficiently detailed with regards to young people's specific medical conditions and medical aids they require (6.5)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, in particular avoidable hazards are removed or minimised and remedial work is finished to a good standard. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make excellent progress as a result of the care and support they receive from this home. This progress extends across their wider lives away from the home. Parents are extremely complimentary about the home. They say their children have made massive strides across all areas of their development while residing here or enjoying their short breaks. In particular their ability to manage different situations, improving their diet and the range of enjoyable activities they are now able to participate in. Most of all parents say their children 'love it here!'

Young people learn to manage their own behaviour and develop their self-confidence and esteem. They develop new skills and improve their abilities which help them enjoy their lives more. For example, some young people now enjoy the opportunities to eat out at restaurants and visit the cinema. Something their parents say they have not been able to do with them. Parents say this is a 'huge achievement' for them.

The support offered to young people's individualised communication systems is excellent. Young people with special communication needs use systems suited to their individual skills and abilities. This includes using the same symbols or signs that they use in school and at home. As a result they confidently engage with staff to let them know how their day has been or to ask for help or choose an activity. High levels of consistent staff interact well with young people, and as a result, they grow in confidence. They demonstrate an increasing ability to express themselves through relaxed and trusting relationships.

Young people's social interactions have significantly increased due to the opportunities afforded to them in the home. They have greater access to a wider range of opportunities to explore the world they live in. Consequently they are increasing in confidence when out in the community, and enjoy life to their full potential. Young people take opportunities to become more independent that are appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

Young people benefit from the home's effective work with schools which helps them improve their achievement. Young people learn to behave better in different settings which help them learn. They take part in and enjoy a wide range of self-chosen activities and interests that support their education and help them develop new skills and new relationships. This includes parks, beaches, cinema, annual holidays and museums.

Young people thoroughly enjoy their trips to the organisations farm. Here they are able to develop a wide range of skills including animal husbandry and growing vegetables. Young people said they enjoy collecting the vegetables to cook at the home.

Young people are aware of their own health care plan needs and those of others. A young person confidently explained how staff respond when other young people are ill. They explained how some young people need extra help and staff have alarms so that other staff know when young people are not feeling well. Young people have an increasing awareness of specific health issues such as the dangers of smoking. They say they encourage people to give up 'smoking as it is very bad for them and could kill them.' Other young people have expanded upon their dietary repertoire as they are more at ease to try new things.

Young people are taking more responsibility for some of their personal care needs. They are increasing in confidence, for example, telling staff when it is safe to cross the road and paying for items at the shops. Young people's dignity is highly respected. This is because staff are sensitive to their need for privacy when delivering personal care.

Young people build and sustain positive relationships with family members and those people who are important to them. All contact arrangements are in place to ensure young people are able to speak to their families on a regular basis during their stay. For young people living at the home they have regular opportunities to visit their families and those people who are important to them.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. This is because staff have high aspirations for them and offer a service based on mutual warmth and respect. There is a clear relationship of trust between the young people and staff which means that young people feel safe and relaxed.

Care planning is clearly and specifically focused on young people's individual needs and based on their wishes and aspirations. One plan is not as detailed and contains some factual inaccuracies, while these have been identified the plan has not been updated to reflect the correct information. This is a recording issue and the impact of this is effectively minimised due to the staff's thorough understanding of each young person's individual needs. This means day to day care practice meets each young person's need extremely well.

A parent said, 'staff go out of their way for each young person. A strength of the setting is their person centred planning which is very much a 'X' (name of young person) approach, what does X need and how do we achieve this for them'.

Young people's health care needs are usually very well recorded: however on a small number of occasion health care plans are not sufficiently detailed with regards to young people's medical conditions or additional medical aids that they use. Additional information is held within young person records, but this is not clearly signposted.

This means staff who are new to the home may not have immediate access to all relevant information.

Staff working in the home have an excellent knowledge of each young person's health care needs, the action to take should they be unwell and when to seek additional support. Consequently young people health is exceptionally well supported.

Staff provide child-focused progress reports and attend regular independent review meetings for each individual. Social workers comment that the weekly reports mean they are fully informed as are parents of the young person's stay, the progress they have made or any issues.

Young people's educational achievement is exceptionally well supported. Staff confidently challenge any barriers to young people's education. They work effectively in collaboration with education providers to support each young person. This is successfully managed in such a way as to improve their behaviour and achievement in class. Placement plans include educational objectives for young people and how these can be supported in the home. This reinforces the work done in school so young people are helped to learn new skills.

Young people's choices are intrinsic to the organisation of the home. High levels of appropriate consultation means young people are able to make choices about all aspects of their care, stay and the activities offered to them. This means they are able to enjoy a much wider range of activities based upon their personal interests.

Staff use language, symbols, activity planning boards, and warm and affectionate relationships, to assist young people to understand and participate in daily routines. This approach encourages young people to be as independent as possible, and make effective choices about their everyday lives. They choose the clothes they wear and what they would like to eat. Staff have realistic expectations of the young people, recognising achievements no matter how small and sharing them with a sense of pride. This increases the young people's confidence and self-worth.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe and happy. Social workers and other professionals are complimentary about the care and attention staff provide to vulnerable young people to ensure their safety and well-being. Parents say staff keep them very well informed about the welfare of their child and that they have every confidence that staff do their best to ensure their safety.

Young people are protected because of staff's secure understanding of the home's safeguarding and child protection procedures. This means they are clear on the action to take should they have any concerns. Positive relationships with social workers mean staff are fully aware of any issues which may impact upon young

people's safety or well-being. Therefore, they are able to take appropriate action to support each young person.

Young people do not go missing. Clear policies and procedures which are understood by staff are in place should this occur. This is supported by the missing from care risk assessments which are sound. The use of the word absconding in records is not appropriate given the needs of the young people being cared for.

Staff do not use restraint or sanction to modify behaviour. Instead they offer support and redirection for young people who demonstrate increased anxiety. Staff are skilled in de-escalation techniques, this means they are able to offer a range of alternative to help young people reduce their anxieties. Rewards systems are working well. A young person eagerly told visitors that as a result of improving their behaviour in school they had been able to get goldfish for their bedroom.

Staff effectively use 'flexible thinking' or sabotage techniques to help young people manage situations which may cause them anxiety. This includes changing the route to school or the times that young people are going out by a few minutes. This enables young people to develop coping strategies to manage changing situations and means they are able to reduce their anxieties.

The quality of the physical environment has deteriorated. A number of areas within the home are looking tired and worn such as hallways, flooring and bathrooms. This detracts from the homely environment staff are striving to maintain. The home is to undergo a refurbishment programme but, this will not take place until later in the year when the young people are on holiday.

Over the last few months the home has sustained significant amounts of damage. A maintenance programme is in place to address immediate repairs. Some of the remedial repairs are not to a sufficient standard, for example, wooden boards used to cover holes in the wall have splintering edges. This poses a risk to young people. Other risk assessments are in place and all gas and electrical safety checks are appropriately maintained. A young person confidently explained the fire evacuation procedures including where to evacuate to and what to do at night. Consequently, they are able to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

Staff recruitment procedures are sound. Staff only commence work once all checks have been completed for their suitability to work with young people. Visitors to the home are required to present a suitable form of identification and are appropriately supervised during their visit. This helps protect young people from having access to unsuitable people.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post since January 2014. They are a qualified and experienced manager. The home is currently being overseen by the service manager because of the Registered Manager's extended leave of absence. The service manager has the qualifications, skills and experience to oversee the home. However, the home has failed to notify Ofsted of the manager's absence and the management structures in place during this time. While this is a breach of the regulations it has not had a detrimental effect upon the care and support provided to each young person.

The staff have high aspirations for each young person so they can achieve to their full potential. Professionals and parents offer high praise for the service. They recognise that staff offer young people opportunities for development and growth that they may not otherwise have. Results clearly demonstrate the positive impact and value that living at the home has on the lives of young people, who grow in confidence, maturity, and develop skills in independence and self-determination.

The Statement of Purpose is shared with young people's families and placing authorities. It is well written and provides a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means that placing authorities and young people's families are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive. The home has not sent a copy of the most recent Statement of Purpose to Ofsted. This was an oversight and does not impact upon the care provided to young people.

The young people guide is well written and include a pictorial format. This means it is easily accessible to all young people and they have greater insight into the care they should receive and the activities offered to them.

Monitoring of the home is satisfactory. The home is monitored on a monthly basis by the Registered Manager and independent person for the organisation. Both provide written reports. However these lack evaluation and do not clearly identify any shortfalls in the recording, any patterns or trends or the action taken to rectify any issues. For example, the shortfalls identified at this inspection have not been identified or acted upon. This impacts upon the home's ability to drive forward improvements.

Records and documentation are usually comprehensive and allow for the uniqueness of the young person to shine. There are some shortfalls in some care plans, risk assessments, health care plans, the home's development plan and not all records are correctly dated.

Staffing levels are based on young people's individual needs and allow a wide range of activities to take place and highly individualised and sensitive care to be provided. Staff are supervised and have annual appraisals. Team meetings take place regularly to allow the staff team to discuss the running of the home and to look at ways to improve the service they offer. Staff also use this time to reflect on young people's progress and to decide how best to support them.

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.