

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389781
Inspection date	2 July 2010
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	8 January 2010
--------------------------------	----------------

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 service is owned and managed by a limited company. It is fully funded by a local authority for the exclusive use by families and children who live in this inner city borough. It is a respite service for children and young people from seven to 17 years old who have a disability. This includes children with emotional or behavioural difficulties, physical and learning disabilities, sensory and communication impairment and those who have an autistic spectrum disorder. The home is registered for looking after eight children at any time. Its stated mission is to reach the largest number of children with special needs and their families with the most warm, loving, dynamic and unique service. Children come for weekend breaks term-time and longer stays during school holidays, on an agreed rolling basis. The same children also attend an after-school activity club at the home. In addition to its children's services, the home also provides support for a group of minority ethnic mothers of children with disabilities. The building has two floors that are connected by a lift and a staircase. The premises are designed and equipped to address the special needs of children and young people with disabilities. Although all areas of the home are accessible to wheelchair users, the home does not offer services for more than three wheelchair users at any time. The home has a mini bus with a tail-lift and limited parking facilities at the back of the house.

At the time of the inspection, five children were using the service. None of them were able to engage verbally with the inspector. The observations of the children's interactions and their non-verbal communication with the staff members and the inspector, secured children's contribution to this inspection and the report.

Summary

This was a full unannounced inspection. Ofsted judged the quality of the service provided to children in this home, in line with the key National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes. The overall quality is good. The home provides a good service that effectively addresses children's needs. Children receive good support to achieve positive outcomes as described in the Every Child Matters document. Their health is appropriately promoted through good information sharing, robust medication procedure and high staff competences. The home appropriately safeguards children's welfare while giving them the opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities of their choice. Children enjoy using this service and being in a positive social environment. They benefit from having built trusting relationships with staff members.

Some weaknesses have been identified and include making improvements to the recording of physical interventions and to demonstrate more fully how the service is supporting children's learning in partnership with the schools. In addition, clear plans and collaboration with the commissioning authority are needed to assist young people's effective transition into adulthood.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The management of the home was asked to ensure that each staff member has their individual performance appraised, at least on an annual basis. Apart from new staff, all staff have now

received a formal appraisal of their work. Staff now receive regular formal supervision and staff files contain a record of monthly supervision meetings.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff effectively maintain and promote children's health. The home's partnership working with health and social professionals, and children's parents is good. This includes good communication of health information between all parties. Good recording systems ensure that staff members are aware of the children's health needs and how to meet those needs. Good learning opportunities are in place for staff to receive regular training on health related topics, such as first-aid, medication, autism and feeding. This training positively contributes in the staff team's ability to promote children's health in practice and to meet children's daily living needs effectively. The robust medication procedure ensures that children consistently and safely receive their medication as prescribed. The provision of a nutritious, varied and balanced diet, as well as suitable individual feeding guidance contributes positively to children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Regular health and safety checks ensure that the environment is physically safe for children. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that the premises are kept secure. A robust staff recruitment procedure ensures that only people suitable to work with children are employed to work at this home.

Staff have access to clear written guidance on a number of topics related to safeguarding. This includes comprehensive policies and procedures on dealing with complaints, child protection concerns, bullying, difficult behaviour and other incidents, such as children missing without authority. The guidance appropriately promotes basic children's rights, such as being safe and having a level of privacy that is suitable for their needs. Good staff training is supplemented with regular discussions on what good care practice entails. Staff implement good care practice and effectively promote children's welfare. Children and young people appeared relaxed and contented.

Although the home's record keeping is generally good, some incidents when a child was physically held were not logged as a restraint. The related records that were available, indicated that the physical intervention was used for the right reason; to protect the child and prevent them from being injured or injuring others. However, the lack of all required information and the inconsistent keeping of the home's central log, makes it impossible to fully assess the effectiveness of the measures used.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

At the time of the inspection, the children appeared pleased to be at this home. They receive highly individualised support from competent staff who they trust.

The home offers good opportunities for children to safely engage in a wide range of in-house and external activities. Children benefit from having the opportunities to develop friendships with their peers while engaging in social activities of their choice. Individual risk assessments ensure that children remain safe while engaging in various activities.

The home provides a positive learning environment for children. It effectively helps them to develop their skills and confidence. Staff work in partnership with schools to consistently support children's learning. However, some individual children's files lacked some of the important information that supports this process. For example, the statement of their special educational needs, personal education plans, individual learning focus records and up to date school reports were not always available.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Carefully planned admissions to the service; include a comprehensive assessment process and good arrangements for multiple day-visits to the home. The home works effectively with the council's integrated team for children with disabilities and with the children's families to ensure that children and their families benefit from receiving a service. Staff members know the children who use the service, very well.

Staff members receive regular training in non-verbal forms of communication, such as Makaton, British Sign Language and Picture Exchange Communication System. This training contributes to the team's ability to effectively communicate with children. Staff are observant and sensitive to children's particular ways of communicating. Staff make every effort to understand what children are expressing and take this into account when providing the service to them.

The home maintains effective links with the families of the children who use the service. The home is effective in enabling parents to influence the service provided to their children. Staff contribute to the regular formal reviews of the arrangements in place, by providing comprehensive reports of the progress the child has made during the review period.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home effectively promotes children's economic well-being. Children enjoy staying in a high quality environment that has been suitably adapted to meet their needs. The premises are appropriately equipped for children with a range of physical disabilities. The equipment includes overhead tracking hoists, adaptable beds and a hydraulic bath. The washing and toileting facilities are suitable. All areas of the home are well maintained and kept tidy and clean. There is an exceptionally well equipped sensory stimulation room in which children can safely relax and engage in exploring different sensations. A small outside area with a colourful mural on the wall and soft turf ground provides a safe space for outdoor games.

The home gives each child a small amount of money to spend during each visit. This is done with the aim of enhancing children's economic well-being. It also provides children with opportunities to learn about the importance of money and budgeting. The home effectively supports children and young people to develop their life-skills in line with their care plans, abilities and risks. However, some young people do not have a pathway or a transitional plan, despite being 17 years old.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed by an experienced and qualified manager who is registered with Ofsted. The stable staff team consistently provides good outcomes for the children and young

people who use this service. Staff receive appropriate support themselves. This is achieved through regular supervision meetings, individual appraisals and team meetings. Staff have good opportunities to receive relevant training and to obtain appropriate qualifications. This has a positive impact on the good practice in the home. The suitably high staffing levels also positively contribute to the safeguarding of children, promoting their welfare and ensuring effective outcomes.

Children's individual records are safely stored. The children's heritage, abilities, needs and individuality are generally well reflected in their records.

The promotion of equalities and diversity is good. Staff receive comprehensive training related to this topic. Staff effectively promote children's feelings of self-worth and through the development of an ethical system in which differences are valued and celebrated.

The comprehensive Statement of Purpose (SOP) and the children's guide ensure that the expectations of the service are clear. The responsible individual effectively monitors the quality of the service that is delivered in line with the SOP. The outcomes of the regular monthly monitoring visits are recorded and appropriately shared with the home and Ofsted.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
14	make all required records, including any statements of children's educational needs and every school report received, available on children's files (Regulation 28.1 and Schedule 3.12 and 3.16)	2 October 2010
22	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose that includes all required details. (Regulation 17.4)	16 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- develop and implement pathway or transition plans for each young person with disabilities and special educational needs, in collaboration with the commissioning authority. (NMS 6)