

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sharon Lewis
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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 borough. It is a respite service for children and young people who have a disability. This includes children and young people 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 eight children and young people at any time. The home also provides an after-school activity club and a support for a group of mothers of children with disabilities of minority ethnic origin.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

Young people receive an excellent short break service which has significantly improved to meet the needs. There is a culture of celebrating the uniqueness of each young person and the diversity of their communities. Young people respond well to the supportive, nurturing environment and are making considerable progress. Young people participate in qualitative activities, which increase their social and life skills. In addition to promoting their independence, calming their moods and improving their communication. This provides them with fulfilling and realistic experiences on par with their peers.

Young people display a sense of peace, ease and happiness in their surroundings. They look forward to their short breaks and their parents are extremely appreciative of the service. Young people have access to a wide range of facilities. The service understands the importance of safeguarding young people. They strongly believe in educating parents and extend safeguarding and other training to them.

Young people benefit from an enthusiastic and experienced staff team. There is a strong desire to promote excellence. High staffing levels meets young people's

individual and collective needs. Young people receive care from staff that are continually trained to provide a quality service. There is proactive leadership demonstrating an extremely effective understanding of the new standards and the inspection framework. There are no requirements or recommendations.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people benefit from excellent outcomes. They overcome exceptional barriers to participation, to achieve in all areas of their lives. They describe the service as 'great', giving them a score of '30 out of 10'. Young people are flourishing, as they grow in self confidence and maximise their potential. Young people demonstrate greater maturity, calmness and socially acceptable behaviour. They are thriving within a stable, empowering environment and are making immense progress in relation to their starting points. Young people exceptionally enjoy their short breaks and their parents unanimously confirm that they are 'happy'. Young people are extending their means of communication through the wide range of pictorial prompts throughout the home. This proactively promotes their choices and self-expression.

Young people learn to develop a positive selfidentity, taking pride in their cultural and national heritage. They participate in celebrating festivals and events. Examples are the Diamond Jubilee, Eid, Easter, Christmas, Chinese New Year and the current Olympics. Young people learn to embrace the rich cultural diversity of city life, enhancing their knowledge and experiences. They engage in local festivals, an example being the Bangla Mela. Young people are able to observe their religious traditions, through attending places of worship or praying within the home. The home has a specific prayer space available, some young people, however, prefer to confidently pray in the communal areas.

Activities are a key part of young people's learning. Individualised and group programmes offer a fun way of young people expressing themselves and enjoying a wide variety of experiences. Young people have the opportunity of engaging in extensive activities internally and in their local and wider community. This provides excellent opportunities for their personal development and fulfilment. Activity programmes take account of their interests, preferences and a desire to nurture their talents. They enjoy arts and crafts, playing on the games console, using the internet, listening to music, eating out, going to the cinema, bowling, go-karting, museums and the theatre. They particularly enjoy attending a nearby adventure playground. Young people also learn to appreciate nature by growing herbs, tomatoes and flowers. Young people also engage in activities which are particularly meaningful to them. Examples are visiting their favourite football club and henna painting their hands.

Promoting independent living skills is at the forefront of the service. Young people receive support from an early age to develop life skills, in preparation for adulthood. They learn extensive independent living skills which builds on their self-worth. This includes practical tasks, such as attending to their personal care, shopping, money

management, cooking, baking, bed making, laying and clearing the table, cleaning, gardening and other household skills. Young people's participation in these tasks actively promotes their well-being, builds their character and contributes to their personal development. This includes making choices, managing their moods and social skills.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

The short break service provides an outstandingly enriching experience for young people. The service focuses on improving their life chances and uniquely empowering them and their families. Staff sensitively care for young people and have an exceptionally strong awareness of their diverse needs. The quality of interactions with young people is commendable. Staff demonstrate excellent communication skills, particularly in relation to responding to non-verbal cues. A key element to young people's self-expression is the pictorial communication system. This is used extensively throughout the home enables young people to communicate their wishes and needs. Young people highlight their fondness for staff. Staff state, that they 'enjoy getting the most out of' young people. They also enjoy 'taking young people to different places, they have never seen'. They feel the service they are offering is 'amazing'.

The service's ethos centres on the promotion of respect, dignity and independence to encourage achievement and growth. Excellent care planning has the young person at the centre of the process. Plans are detailed, with very clear objectives and targets. Expectations of young people are high, yet achievable. This includes actively setting goals to ensure positive progress. Young people enjoy outstanding individualised support. This takes into account their disability, race, culture, religion, communication and behavioural needs. Care planning acknowledges young people's abilities and unique qualities. The robust reviewing system celebrates young people's achievements and outlines their complex individual needs. The provision of photographs provides comprehensive evidence. Young people's files fully detail and evaluate their progress.

Young people are able to develop and maintain significant friendships with each other. Young people comment that one of the positive aspects of their short breaks is 'meeting up with friends and the staff'. They relate well together and have an amicable, mutually respectful relationship. Young people are able to influence decision making, through key work meetings and other avenues. An example is purchasing of more video games and activity planning. Young people benefit from the home's close working relationship with parents. This enables staff to have a better understanding of young people and the behaviours. There is a parent's forum, quarterly newsletter and an annual parent planner. Staff and relatives also communicate regularly by telephone. The service empowers parents by inviting them to join staff training events. The organisation also runs a women's group for mothers. This enables them to learn new skills, enjoy fun activities and receive valued support.

Young people benefit from very good health care arrangements. Staff are able to manage a wide range of health conditions. They receive the necessary training to effectively respond to health needs. The service encourages young people to lead a healthy lifestyle. There are specific innovative initiatives with focus on healthy eating and fitness. Young people learn the importance of good nutrition. They enjoy a wide range of international, appetising nutritious meals with daily choices. Young people describe the food as 'nice and yummy'. Personal preferences and needs are excellently catered for. This includes gluten free and halal diets. Young people receive encouragement to incorporate exercise in their daily routines. They regularly enjoy going for leisurely walks, swimming, using fun exercise equipment, trampolining and dancing. The diverse staff team is also able to meet particular cultural needs regarding skin care and hair care.

Young people reside in a spacious, very comfortable, well maintained building. The environment takes into account young people's disabilities. Ceiling track hoists are available throughout. Young people have adapted bathrooms, shower chairs, lifts, handrails and adjustable beds. Intercom and keypads helps to provide a secure environment. Throughout the premises are photographs of children, their art work and culturally diverse pictures. The entrance area welcomes visitors with a greeting sign in a wide range of languages. The home's values and inspiration for young people is also on display. This clearly defines the ethos and care practices.

Young people have access to a range of communal areas. Young people enjoy living in an environment which offers a good selection of internal and outdoor activities. They enjoy relaxing in the main lounge, playing on the games console and they can also use a big indoor swing. Young people can also relax in the refurbished sensory room. They enjoy using the internet in the family lounge, which also contains another television, an interactive projector, pool table and motor toys for co-ordination. Young people can also enjoy playing in the cushioned surface garden, which has a trampoline. Mealtimes are a social occasion, where young people eat in the kitchen's dining area.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **outstanding** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

The service has excellent arrangements which focus on safeguarding and promoting the best interests of young people. The ability to meet young people's complex needs is at the heart of staff recruitment. The vetting of staff is comprehensive and exceeds regulatory requirements. The service is highly selective, with the recruitment of the right person for the job being more important than the filling of a vacancy. Young people learn the importance of personal safety. This includes road safety and external dangers. Young people are able to explain the hazards whilst out in the community. They have their own display board dedicated to staying safe. Individual risk assessments extensively detail concerns, relating to each young person.

The service's safeguarding and child protection policies are on display throughout the home. Staff benefit from specific training which proactively addresses safeguarding disabled training. The service is also highly committed to raising awareness amongst parents. They are able to attend training and have specialist sessions within their parents group. This includes first aid, fire safety, general health and safety and strengthening families. Feedback from parents and staff demonstrated a 100% positive response regarding their understanding of the safeguarding procedure. The complaints procedure is widely available. The service has not received any complaints for over a year. Their substantial engagement with young people, families and the placing authority ensures an open dialogue between them. This enables any concerns to be promptly raised.

Young people benefit from the service's ability to effectively manage challenging behavioural needs. There is a considerably strong emphasis on diverting young people and engaging them in meaningful activities. Young people are making significant progress in managing their moods. They respond well to preventative strategies, which includes redirection to other tasks; in addition to positive reinforcement and sensitive coaching in relation to acceptable behaviour. The low number of challenging incidents is exceptional. Staff do not have to restrain young people or impose any sanctions. Young people enjoy their short breaks. They do not experience any bullying and are not absent without authority. The service, however, does identify young people who may have a tendency to go missing. Dedicated risk assessments comprehensively highlight these issues.

Young people benefit from the service's very comprehensive implementation of health and safety. There is an excellent risk management approach and promotion of good practice. This involves extensive consideration of potential hazards. The service has regularly updated risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, and young people's behaviour and activities. The home provides a secure and extremely safe environment. The service has an outstanding judgement in relation to their environmental health food hygiene inspection. Certificates also confirm regular checks of equipment, water, electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. Young people benefit from regular fire drills and tests. This raises their awareness of emergency procedures.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **outstanding**.

The service excels as a short break provider. Young people's needs and wellbeing are at the heart of the service's structure. Young people benefit from dynamic, passionate leadership and a strongly committed staff team. The clear Statement of Purpose that highlights the overall mission, aims, objectives, philosophy of care, and the range of facilities and services available. Young people have their own guide which is available in different formats. Their guide clearly details what they can expect from the service. These documents are subject to regular reviews and provides an excellent portrayal of how the service positively enhances young people's

lives. Parents greatly appreciate the service, commenting, that 'all is very well. I am happy and my child is happy'. Young people enjoy the fact that they, 'get to have fun'.

Staffing arrangements are flexible and meet the holistic needs of young people. The high staffing ratio enables young people to receive one to one support, if needed. Young people receive care from a very competent experienced staff team. The dynamic mix of personalities and skills promote clear vision and values. Management is described by staff as 'very helpful'. Staff work extremely well as a team. They are able to use their initiative and influence decision making. The service employs a range of sessional staff. A significant number also work at the local special school, therefore young people see a familiar face. This provides excellent continuity of care for young people. Staffing is culturally reflective of young people. This is particularly beneficial for young people, where English is an additional language.

The service demonstrates a very good commitment to staff development. The structured staff training and development programme focuses on practically equipping staff for their work. This includes vocational training. The extensive range of specialist training and resources provides an outstanding learning environment for staff. This includes e-learning opportunities. The service is very equitable and sessional staff also have access to all training events. Staff receive regular individual supervision and appraisals are in progress. There is an excellent and proactive programme of professional development. A comprehensive network of meetings enables staff to regularly increase their knowledge and keep-up-to-date on issues pertaining to young people; this increase in knowledge and skills, ultimately benefits young people.

Leadership and management within the home is significantly strong. The experienced, professionally qualified manager is very proactive and meticulously investigates new developments within social care. This includes regularly accessing Ofsted and government websites ensuring they are aware of new changes, guidance and legislation. They successfully disseminate this information to staff, young people and parents. The manager listens and staff comment that they 'respond immediately' to any issues. The well-developed quality monitoring system is centred on the experience of young people. There is an excellent awareness of areas for further development and plans in place to further perpetuate best practice. Young people would like the opportunity to go on holidays. The organisation is also considering expanding the service and empowering payments through increasing their knowledge regarding direct payments.

The home is well resourced and financially viable. The service has a contract with the local authority. There is excellent communication with parents and the placing authority to ensure proactive partnership working. The substantial commitment to promoting equality and diversity, is apparent in care practices and documentation. All national minimum standards are met. There is a dedication to vastly improving young people's outcomes. There is a driving force to excel and continually reshape the service. Staff satisfaction and motivation is outstanding. They enjoy their work, they describe it as 'satisfying on a humanitarian level'. Staff maintain comprehensive

records that they store securely. Records clearly outline young people's strengths and how the service adds value to their lives.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.