

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC389781
Inspection date	8 January 2010
Inspector	Seka Graovac
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10 July 2009
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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 7 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. Their families remain their main carers. 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.

The total number of children that use the registered respite service at this home is 25. No children were available at the time of the inspection.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. Its main focus was to re-assess the effectiveness of the processes in place to safeguard children who use the service. The other outcomes for children were not inspected on this occasion. The main inspection finding is that the home continues to safeguard children well. Their welfare is effectively promoted.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection was conducted in July 2009. The overall quality of the service was judged as good. No actions were raised. The management was asked to increase the frequency of staff individual supervision meetings. This has been done. Children are looked after in this home by well supported staff members.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home safeguards and promotes children's welfare well. Staff members are robustly vetted before they commence the employment. This ensure children's safety. Staff receive extensive and regularly updated training in child protection, safeguarding, behaviour management, health and safety. This, together with clear policies and procedures enables staff to effectively promote children's welfare and to protect their safety.

The home's close partnership with parents and the placing authority effectively contributes to safeguarding. The management listens carefully to the stakeholders' views. The home responds proactively to the comments made on how to improve the quality of the service. A clear complaints procedure is available in different languages and formats. There are no formal complaints, indicating that the communication between the management and the other stakeholders is effective. There are high levels of satisfaction with the service.

The appropriately high staffing and supervision levels, together with staff vigilance and competence guard well against bullying. Staff manage children's behaviour well. There have been no incidents of children being absent without authority. Staff effectively provide high levels of individually tailored support to children. This promotes their welfare well. At the same time, staff ensure that children's privacy is respected at all times. The home effectively contribute to the protection of children's rights.

The regular health and safety checks are in place. This ensures that the environment is kept safe. External contractors regularly service the installations and the equipment. The fire safety checks include weekly alarm tests and quarterly fire drills.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children live in a well-managed home. They are effectively looked after by qualified and well trained staff. The manager has appropriate qualifications in management and social care. He is registered with Ofsted. His leadership is effective. Staff members report having a strong commitment to learning and development. A wide range of training opportunities is made available to them. They benefit from regular team meetings and good team work. They report regular supervision meetings and good management support. However, the organisation's staff performance appraisal system is not effective. For example, some staff have not had their performance formally appraised for many years. This has not impacted negatively on training received by staff members.

Good internal and external quality assurance systems are in place. This ensures good monitoring of the conduct of the home and of the quality of the service provided to children and their families. The responsible individual is closely involved with the service and produces monthly monitoring reports.

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

Standard	Action	Due date
28	appraise formally, each staff member's individual performance at least on an annual basis. (Regulation 27.4)	8 April 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.