

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	09/01/2013
Inspector	Sharon Lewis
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/08/2012
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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

Good progress	The children's home has demonstrated continued improvement in quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the large majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Satisfactory progress	The children's home has maintained quality of care and outcomes for children and young people and where appropriate has addressed all requirements and the majority of recommendations that were raised at the previous inspection.
Inadequate progress	The children's home has failed to address one or more requirements and/or has not met the majority of recommendations and/or the quality of care and outcomes for children and young people have declined since the last full inspection.

Progress

Since their previous inspection the service is judged to be making **good progress**.

This interim unannounced inspection focuses on the progress made since the last inspection. The judgement made at the last inspection was outstanding. No actions or recommendations were made at the previous inspection. The service is continually evolving to provide children with better outcomes. Children comment that they, 'Like going to discovery home with my friends.' Children greatly enjoy their breaks and thrive within the relaxed, nurturing environment. Parents express their elated satisfaction with the service. One stating, 'All is very well and I am happy and my child is happy.' The service seeks to proactively empower parents and meet the holistic needs of families. The parents' forum continues to be a success; the recent first aid training is highlighted as being extremely beneficial. There is an

acknowledgment of the isolation, cultural stereotypes and the unique needs of fathers; a recent seminar addressed this issue. The home is working in partnership with the local authority to launch a father's group. This will have a social element alongside identifying specific opportunities to enable them to be more effective in their role.

Leadership within the home is forward thinking, inclusive and centred on the needs of children and their families. There is a strong desire to make placements more meaningful and to have a positive impact on children's lives. Staff continue to embrace partnership working. This includes liaising with adult services in reference to transition planning. A good example being staff accompanying a young person to visit a possible new placement. The service keeps up-to-date on good practice and developments within the sector. An example is staff attendance at an autism seminar, which had an international key speaker. The service continues to offer children an after school club and day care. There is also the provision for emergency short term care. This is a valued resource, especially when parents are ill. The home is currently not being used to their full capacity and does not maximise on the support they are able to offer to families. There are, however, plans to further address this issue and, 'Be here for disabled children and their families.'

Children are very comfortable in their surroundings and fully enjoy their breaks. Their views are at the heart of decision making, particularly activity planning. Children choose activities from a pictorial book, which provides photographs of them enjoying an extensive range of activities. The introduction of activity evaluation forms focuses on the outcomes for children and how they can be further improved. Children benefit from a wide selection of indoor, outdoor activities and day trips. They had an exceptionally good summer during the Olympics and went to watch sporting events at a nearby park. Children are currently looking forward to the forthcoming trips to Madame Tussauds and Harry Potter World. Children enjoy learning about each other's cultural and religious festivals. This includes participating in Christmas, Diwali, Eid and Halloween celebrations. Children receive support to undertake their particular religious customs, which includes attending places of worship.

Children continue to make significant progress in relation to their behaviour, communication, social and independent living skills. Children are enabled to address their anti-social behaviour, which is decreasing. Examples are that children are no longer spitting and shouting. Children have better tolerance of each other, are more conversant and calmer. The comprehensive use of a variety of communication methods enables children to express their needs. Staff work with children to improve their confidence and build up their unique strengths. An example of this is the success in assisting children with their independent living skills. Children are now able to make their breakfast, undertake their personal care, assist with grocery shopping and practice their budgeting skills. Children highlight their needs and how to manage their moods in pictorial based person centred plans. The key work system enables staff to set personal targets for children. The introduction of individualised equality and diversity plans also ensures all aspects of each child's identity is met.

Children receive protection from the home's safeguarding and health and safety

practices. Staff receive on-going training and know who to contact in the event of an allegation. Staff understand their duty of care and the need to report any concerns regarding neglect. Robust recruitment ensures staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. The home learns from incidents and have liaised with appropriate professionals to improve security. The regular servicing of equipment and safety checks, additionally contributes to the secure environment. Children and their families know how to complain, they are, however regularly consulted and satisfied with the service. The home has received a compliment from a student, who undertook a placement at the home. This highlighted that it was a 'pleasure' working for them. Quality assurance from internal and external monitoring continues to promote the welfare of children. The comprehensive regulation 34 report provides a good audit of the service, demonstrating their commitment to improvement.

Children receive care from a stable, competent, culturally reflective staff team. The permanent staff team is complemented by a core group of sessional workers. There is excellent continuity of care as former sessional staff have been appointed to the permanent posts. Strong staff retention contributes to the stable home environment. All staff receive regular supervision, which supports them in fulfilling their respective roles. The wide range of training opportunities, team and practice development meetings further equips staff with the skills needed to provide a high quality service. Staff benefit from training in business planning, autism, managing challenging behaviour, first aid, food hygiene and gastronomy feeding. The only recommendation relates to staff appraisals. All permanent staff have benefitted from an annual appraisal of their performance. The home has long standing sessional staff, who receive supervision but have not had a formal individual appraisal. In addition children's views do not influence the appraisal process. The new standards highlight this as an area for consideration.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- appraise the performance individually and formally for all staff at least annually and this appraisal should take into account children's views. (NMS 19.6)

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 progress made by the provider since the last full inspection, identifies any further strengths, any areas for improvement and makes judgements as outlined in the *Inspection of children's homes – framework for inspection*.