

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC391503
Inspection date	29/11/2010
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	25/01/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 Crispins, 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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 provides short breaks for children who have a learning difficulty. The premises provide adapted accommodation to support the children's needs. There are two adjacent lounge areas, a dining room, a kitchen which may be accessed by children with supervision, two bathrooms, an office and storage space, a covered play area outside and garden areas. The home is situated in a residential area within easy travelling distance from a range of community resources.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection planned to review the service provided against identified key national minimum standards. The progress the provider has made with a recommendation set on the previous visit was also reviewed.

This is a well managed home where children receive a high standard of well-planned care delivered by a very experienced and dedicated staff team. Staff are well trained and supported in their role. There are robust and effective safeguarding systems in place which prioritise the well-being of children. Good health is promoted and children's health is closely monitored. Children receive an excellent level of support and are encouraged to make personal choices, to develop new skills and to make a positive contribution. The service works in partnership with parents and involved professionals.

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager has taken action to broaden the focus and planning for children moving towards transition to an adult service. This means that children now receive well-planned support to learn new skills.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are outstanding arrangements in place to promote the healthy lives of children during short break placements at this service. Children's assessed individual healthcare needs are reflected into care plans developed in consultation with parents and health professionals. A very experienced and knowledgeable staff team closely

monitor children's health and take action when necessary to ensure that needs are fully supported. Comments from parents include confirmation that staff understand their child's health care needs and that they are 'confident in the way health care needs are supported'.

Children's dietary needs are met to a high standard. Guidance from parents is incorporated into menu planning. Individual restrictions and preferences are recorded clearly for staff preparing meals. Meals are homemade and include a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables. Where appropriate children are encouraged and supported to take part in food preparation activities. For example, they may take part in food shopping, cooking activities are supported and during the summer months vegetables have been grown in the garden.

A safe system of medication administration is operated. Staff training on the safe handling of medication is provided and competency is assessed on an annual basis by the management team. A health professional facilitates annual training for the administration of emergency medication and epilepsy awareness. Medication profiles are held on file to inform care arrangements, which are also confirmed by parents at the beginning of each short break placement. A record is made for each occasion medication is administered to children and the system is closely monitored by senior staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety and their general welfare are prioritised. Well-developed safeguarding systems are implemented in practice by competent staff.

Children are protected by safe staff recruitment practice. All required checks are undertaken prior to staff commencing work in the home. Staff undertake training which supports their ability to protect children, including; fire safety, food hygiene, behaviour management and health and safety training. Staff are aware of their responsibility to ensure that children's privacy and dignity is respected during the provision of personal care. Comments from staff include 'there is a huge emphasis on the respect for the privacy of the young people'.

A safe environment is provided. Risk assessments inform practice and care arrangements. The premises are secure and children are monitored at all times. As a result children are unable to leave without the supervision of a staff member. Extensive health and safety monitoring checks are undertaken. For example, water temperature, food hygiene arrangements and fire safety systems.

Parents know how to make a complaint and say that they 'feel confident that any issues they raise will be addressed promptly'. Complaints guidance for children is displayed using symbols and simple language.

Behaviour is well managed. Detailed behaviour management plans, produced by a community learning disability nurse in consultation with school, parents and this service, inform care practice. Staff understand children's behaviours in the context of their disabilities. Comments from staff include 'because we know the children so well we would quickly identify if something was wrong'. There is minimal use of sanctions and physical intervention is used only as a last resort. Comments from placing social workers include 'staff manage some complex behavioural challenges calmly'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

A high standard of well-planned care and encouragement is provided which supports children to enjoy and achieve. Caring and knowledgeable staff prioritise good outcomes for children and promote new opportunities for them. For example: there has been a recent project to grow and eat home produce; children are supported to take part in basic cookery activities; and children are also supported to take part in community based activities. Comments from parents include 'my child enjoys having the opportunity to have a sleep-over type experience, which they would not get anywhere else'. Also 'my child really enjoys coming to this service'. Comments from social workers include 'children seem to thoroughly enjoy themselves'.

While the primary responsibility for planning and maintaining children's educational needs remains with parents, there are very good arrangements in place to support educational needs during the short respite periods spent at this service. Key workers visit children during the school day, where they gain information which enables them to work consistently with educational staff and to understand more about children's needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and families receive a good level of support prior to the initial short break placement. Staff visit children at their family home, families visit the service, children attend for a tea visit and key workers visit children during the school day. As a result the service is well informed about children's needs.

Children's care needs are assessed in consultation with parents and involved professionals. Well-detailed and broad-ranging placement plans are produced which guide the delivery of a high standard of care. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as and when necessary. As a result care planning is both current and effective.

Children are supported to make a positive contribution and to make personal choices. For example, children are encouraged to reach personal targets and they are

encouraged to make choices about activities and menu planning. Children receive appropriate care which supports them to have a say in their care arrangements. For example, agreed communication needs are supported and key workers spend one-to-one time with children.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Children live in accommodation which has been well designed to meet individual and group needs. While the home is decorated and furnished in a bright and modern fashion, bedrooms are designed to be low arousal in order to meet individual needs. The home is well-equipped with appropriate adaptations and play facilities. Staff are proud of the environment and how this supports children to enjoy their short break visits.

Well-planned arrangements are in place to support children to reach identified targets and to learn new skills. Comments from social workers include 'staff work on an individual basis with each young person to help them develop independent living skills'. These arrangements are appropriate and realistically reflect the level of ability of each child. For example, targets may be small steps encouraging taking of personal choice, they may also be involvement in growing vegetables in the garden, taking part in baking activities and meal preparation. Children are also encouraged to take on increasing responsibility for their own personal care.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

This is a well-managed service where children are cared for by dedicated and competent staff. The Registered Manager is supported by a suitably experienced assistant who is able to deputise when necessary. There is a core of very experienced staff who have worked within this service for several years. Children are closely supervised and supported by appropriate numbers of staff. Staff attend expected key areas of training with refresher sessions facilitated at regular intervals. Parents and social workers are positive about the quality of care afforded to children and have confidence in the staff team. Comments from social workers include 'this is a very good service providing good quality respite care. Parents are very satisfied and children enjoy their stays'. Comments from parents include 'the staff always do extra and are very understanding'.

Children's files are maintained in good order and hold the necessary level of historical information and current assessments to inform effective care planning.

There is excellent management oversight of care arrangements. Managers closely monitor record keeping, care planning and the progress children are making. An

external manager also visits the home on a monthly basis to review the quality of care provided.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The staff team are committed to promoting new opportunities for children. This may be through experiences within the home such as baking a cake or by accessing community activities and resources. Individual needs are fully supported through well-planned care. The team keep under review and debate the manner in which issues of equality and diversity are supported with a view to identifying areas for further improvement.