

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	16 February 2010
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	5 June 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

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children of either gender, between the ages of eight and 17 years old, who have a learning disability.

There is a range of local community facilities nearby and easy access to local transport. There is some car parking for visitors. Although the home has a driveway, on-street parking is for permit holders only with some pay-and-display spaces.

The home is detached, with front and rear gardens, situated in a residential area of a large city. Downstairs there is a hallway, kitchen, dining room, lounge and play room. Upstairs are three bedrooms, a bathroom and office accommodation. The home has been fitted with minor aids and adaptations to help support children with physical disabilities.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection with half-a-day's notice. This was the first inspection of the home since it was registered. All the outcome areas have been inspected.

The home has been providing a service to children for just under three months. Since then, policies, procedures and practice have been adapted and revised to best meet the needs of children. There is good collaboration and partnership working with the parents of the children and the local placing authority.

The home provides good outcomes for children living there and a small number of recommendations have been made to improve practice further. Care practice ensures children are safe and healthy, and there is good support for them to do well at school and develop their interests and hobbies. Children are supported well to make choices and be independent. The home is managed effectively and staff are committed to do what is best for the children. It is a friendly, supportive place to work. The overall quality rating is good.

As a result of this inspection the registered provider is required to: improve the way medicines are administered; keep better records of sanctions; and produce a children's guide and a written development plan for the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

As this was the first inspection of the home since registration there are no improvements to report on.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Overall there are good arrangements for promoting the healthy lives of children coming to stay at the home.

Although children live at the home most of the time, parents can still retain responsibility for their child's health care as a partnership arrangement. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to

working well with families and health professionals to ensure that children receive the necessary care they need to remain in good health. The manager makes sure that the necessary records of children's health needs and required support are kept up to date. This helps staff work effectively with parents and health workers to ensure children's health is promoted and protected. Staff are trained in first aid to provide help if there are any accidents, and staff will not hesitate to contact emergency services if necessary.

Staff promote healthy eating and also support children to plan and choose the menus, encouraging them to eat healthy home-cooked meals. Staff are developing a resource of pictures of different foods and meals to help children communicate their needs and choices. There are planned themes to help children learn about food and cultures from around the world.

The current medication procedures to help ensure children get their medication at the right times are suitable. The procedure of secondary dispensing medication from original containers is not good practice and potentially risks mistakes being made. This is minimised by other checks and balances in place regarding administration of children's medication. All of these procedures are monitored by the manager and reviewed as part of the quality monitoring in the home to ensure this important aspect of children's care is completed effectively.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for keeping children living at the home safe. Staff receive safeguarding training and know what to do to keep children safe if there are any allegations or suspicions of abuse. Staffing levels and care practice ensure that children are well supervised, do not go missing and are free from bullying at the home.

There is a good ethos and practice with regard to behaviour management. Staff interact and respond well with children, engaging them in meaningful activities. Children think the rules are fair and they are treated well by staff. They are praised for good behaviour and staff use appropriate de-escalation methods to resolve any aggressive, unacceptable behaviour. As a last resort, approved physical interventions are used to protect the safety of children.

Such incidents use the minimal amount of physical intervention necessary. This is monitored by the manager to ensure any physical restraint used is reasonable. Records are kept of these incidents and of any sanctions used in response to unacceptable behaviour. These are monitored as well, to protect children and ensure there is good practice. Records about sanctions are not always clear with regard to how long a sanction was used for and how effective it was. Not all sanctions have been recorded in the sanction book. Although this makes it harder to monitor staff practice, the minor shortfalls in recording have not affected children's welfare. Staff receive regular training about behaviour management, and their positive approach to care helps ensure that children develop good social behaviour. Parents report that children control their outbursts and anger better as there are good boundaries and consistency provided by the home.

Children's privacy is respected, and there is good practice with regards to helping them with personal care. Information is handled and stored confidentially, and telephone calls and meetings can be held in private.

There is a complaints process and there is good action to resolve children's concerns as they arise. There is also a good response to concerns raised by parents and neighbours.

The home is well maintained and provides good physical safety and security.

There is careful recruitment of staff including necessary checks to make sure only those who are safe and suitable work in the home. Similarly, visitors are monitored to ensure the safety of children in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There is good individual support for children, education is promoted, and interests and hobbies are encouraged and developed.

Children have individual detailed placement plans identifying how their needs will be supported. Staff are knowledgeable about each child, how best to support them and provide good care. Links have been made with local agencies that also provide support to children. Practice is developing with regard to providing children with a range of ways to communicate and make choices as part of their care and support. This is based on the use of pictures and signs about daily life. Staff understand how important good communication is with children in their care, how it affects their behaviour and helps promote positive outcomes for their health, safety and well-being. Parents report that children like the staff and have built up trust and positive relationships with them; this was confirmed by the children too.

Education is actively promoted and children have good attendance at school. There is good communication with schools and parents to help ensure continuity of care between school, parents and care staff. There is a range of resources in the home and effective support from staff to support children with their education, for example, helping them read and write.

Staff are enthusiastic at encouraging children to be involved in a good range of leisure activities, both indoors and out in the community. There is a good range of resources at the home: toys, books, games, DVDs, a computer/play room and a garden. There are regular trips out, and good support to use local leisure facilities, local transport and youth groups.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements for helping children contribute to decisions made about their lives and the running of the home. This starts with well-planned admissions, which are sensitive to the needs of children moving into the home. Children and their families are able to visit several times before moving in. Both the needs of children living in the home and children moving in are taken into account in managing admissions. This makes sure children are appropriately placed at the home.

Children's care needs are assessed and each child has a good individual plan of care detailing the support they will get from staff to ensure their health, welfare and safety are promoted and protected. Children's views about their care, and those of their family, are responded to well. Their care plans are regularly reviewed to reflect their achievements and development.

There is good support for children to maintain contact with, and visit, their families and friends.

Children have plenty of opportunities to be included in what is going on and to participate in decisions about their care, the running of the home and social events. Staff interact positively

with children, treating them with respect, promoting individuality, modelling and rewarding good behaviour. This has helped develop good relationships. Staff are caring, thoughtful and enthusiastic in making sure children are well looked after and have a positive experience of living at the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There is good support for children to make choices and develop their independence based on their needs and abilities. Staff are effective at providing opportunities for children to develop life skills, their social skills and confidence.

The home is situated in a quiet residential area and provides children with good quality accommodation.

Children benefit from a friendly, welcoming, homely atmosphere. Décor and furnishings are of good quality and the home is clean and tidy.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is well managed and run in the best interests of the children living there.

There is detailed information in the form of a Statement of Purpose about the home available to children, their relatives and social workers. There is not a children's guide using pictures, signs and symbols that would be more user-friendly for a younger age group to help explain about the daily routines and what life is like in the home. However, as admissions to the home are planned and children visit before they move in, staff do explain all of this information to children.

There are clear deputising arrangements in the manager's absence and good staffing levels to help make sure children get all the support they need. Staff are working towards the required care qualification that demonstrates their competence to do this job. Staff get good support from the manager and a variety of

training to help them provide quality care for the children they look after.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Care practice promotes social inclusion, participation and meeting children's individual needs, including those pertaining to age, race, religion, culture and disability. Children are involved in a variety of cultural events throughout the year. Care records are well kept and reflect children's needs, progress and individuality.

There is effective monitoring of care practice to help make sure staff are doing their jobs well and children

benefit from good outcomes. This quality assurance process has not produced a written development plan for the future of the home incorporating any feedback from children and their parents. The manager has plans for improvement but the absence of a written plan without clearly defined aims and objectives potentially risks these plans being implemented.

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
13	ensure there are arrangements for the safe administration of any medicine; in particular cease the practice of secondary dispensing (Regulation 21 (1))	31 March 2010
22	ensure that written records are made of any measure of discipline as required by this regulation (Regulation 17 (4))	31 March 2010
1	ensure there is a children's guide that complies with the requirements of this regulation. (Regulation 4 (3), (4) & (5))	23 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that records of sanctions used include the duration and effectiveness of the sanction (NMS 22.1)
- ensure there is a written development plan reviewed annually for the future of the home identifying any planned changes on the operation or resources of the home. (NMS 33.5)