

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397293
Inspector	Rosemary Chapman
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Derby City Council
Registered person address	Treasurers Department Council House, Corporation Street DERBY DE1 2FE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Johnston
Registered manager	Gemma Bullock
Date of last inspection	19/03/2014

Inspection date	28/08/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are achieving good outcomes and making good progress in all areas of their lives. This is because staff are well trained, well supported and passionate about the young people for whom they care. They are child-focused and enthusiastic in ensuring the young people have choice and are involved in the provision of their care and support. Good partnership working with parents and other professionals ensures care is consistent and meets the young people's needs. This is particularly the case in relation to managing behaviour, which at times can be challenging.

Young people are safe because staff are trained in safeguarding and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is no bullying and challenging behaviour is well managed.

Although leadership and management have been judged as adequate, this is because the manager is recently registered and has not had sufficient time to fully embed the changes she has already made, nor implement the ones planned. Staff morale has improved and they are very positive about her leadership, saying there is a clear direction and focus. The manager is passionate about improving young people's progress and outcomes and extremely committed to continued development.

Documentary shortfalls have been identified which relate to the content of young people's files and re-establishing the tamper-proof volume in which to record physical intervention. Improved managerial monitoring of records is recommended to prevent this re-occurring.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides care and accommodation for up to six children and young people who are diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum and/or having learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
27/09/2013	Full	adequate
06/12/2012	Interim	good progress
02/05/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17B (3))	24/10/2014
28 (2001)	ensure a record in permanent form is maintained on each child accommodated in the children's home which includes the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; is kept up to date; and is signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 28 (1)(a)(b)(c))	24/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring. (NMS 21.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress and have good outcomes as a result of living in this home. One parent commented: 'He did really well and made good progress in everything.' Young people play an active part in decision making through individual consultation sessions and care planning, and are offered choices at every opportunity by means of a variety of communication methods. Young people make appropriate attachments to the staff while maintaining their positive relationships with their family members, who they see on a regular basis.

Young people have good health and make good progress with their self-care and social skills. This includes using the toilet, better communication skills and improved behaviour. This in turn improves their ability to form positive relationships, their self-confidence, their self-esteem and their ability to access the community in a more positive way. All the young people enjoy a variety of activities, most of which are in the local area, such as swimming or bowling. They also enjoy trips further afield such as to theme parks or holidays. This enhances their life experiences as well as developing their skills and confidence.

All the young people have full-time school places, very good attendance and they achieve well. For example, one young person had 95% attendance this year and exceeded all but one of his targets. Young people make successful transitions into adult services. One parent commented: 'They set him on the right path to adulthood.'

Quality of care **good**

Young people like the staff who support them and they have good relationships with them. They also get on well with each other and any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with positively. Staff use a variety of means of communication, such as signing or symbols, to engage the young people in expressing their wishes. For example, they are encouraged to choose the menus, activities and how their room is decorated.

Young people are enabled to make a complaint because the procedure is in pictorial form and readily available in each bedroom. To further support this, an independent advocate visits the home every month to deal with any issues the young people may raise. Young people are also positively involved in care planning. For example, they complete a 'passport' outlining their likes, dislikes and other information which is then used to inform the care plan. Care planning is very comprehensive and addresses all areas of need. Young people, as well as parents, are encouraged to express their views on the care plan and sign the completed document. Staff use social stories as a means of ensuring young people understand what is happening.

There are good relationships with parents and relatives, which supports and maintains positive placements. One parent commented: 'Staff keep in touch with me and are really nice; I can talk to them and they are willing to listen and support me.' Communication is good and staff keep parents 'in the loop', to quote another parent. Staff also work well with social workers and other agencies. Social workers comment that communication is good and that staff are helpful and welcoming. Good partnership working ensures that everyone is working consistently together for the benefit of the young people.

Young people have good access to healthcare services. A nurse from another children's home visits weekly to monitor young people's progress and the medication systems, which are safe and effective. Each young person has a healthcare file which outlines any particular needs and medical appointments. If there are any concerns, staff access appropriate advice from, for example, the doctor or paediatrician. This ensures that young people's health needs are promptly addressed and they remain well.

Young people attend school regularly, getting there by taxi. There are good relationships with all of the schools. Staff attend meetings and fully engage in personal education plan reviews. There is good liaison and communication to ensure everyone who works with the young person is consistent.

Young people have a variety of interests. Some enjoy playing on games consoles, using the computer, watching television and playing on the equipment in the home. Others enjoy swimming, bowling, going on trips and visits to theme parks. All of these are facilitated so that young people have good engagement with the local community and have a variety of experiences.

The staff team is culturally diverse which enables the young people to develop a good understanding of the community in which they live. There is a world map in the dining room which gives examples of foods from various countries to prompt discussion about difference.

The home is purpose built and well maintained and decorated. It has good facilities, such as a soft play room, a computer room, an arts and activities room and a good outdoor play area. A recent development has been the establishment of a room to promote independent living skills so that young people can learn to cook and make drinks. Bedrooms are en-suite and are personalised to meet the needs and wishes of the young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe and feel safe in the home. There is no bullying and staff are fully aware of the young people's behavioural needs and triggers. Each young person has a detailed and individual behaviour management plan to guide staff in how to respond consistently and appropriately. This is regularly reviewed to ensure it is still relevant and up to date. Physical intervention is rarely used and when it is, it is appropriate. However, although it is fully recorded and monitored, the tamper-proof volume which was previously used to record it is no longer in use. The use of loose-leaf sheets does not comply with regulatory requirements as there is the potential to alter the text. Sanctions are not used; instead, young people have targets and reward charts which are consistently used and regularly monitored to promote good behaviour.

Staff demonstrate a robust understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, which is supported by regular and updated training. Appropriate action is taken in the event of a concern or allegation, including contact with the local authority designated officer, with whom there is a good relationship.

Staff are recruited by robust procedures which comply with up-to-date guidance to ensure that only those people suitable to work with children are employed. Similarly, visitors are checked and supervised while on the premises to ensure they do not have inappropriate access to the young people.

No young people go missing because the levels of staff supervision are high. Risk is appropriately assessed and documented, including risks connected with any trips and activities. This ensures that staff know what to do to prevent young people coming to harm. Young people are further protected because the environment is safe and secure. Each young person has an individual fire risk assessment, staff have annual fire safety training and there are regular drills and tests of the system. This promotes young people's understanding of what to do in an emergency, although they are realistically reliant on the staff to fully support them in an evacuation.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home has a manager who became registered within the last month. The manager has a significant amount of experience in residential childcare and autism and an appropriate level of experience in management, although this is her first post as a Registered Manager. She has commenced the course for the relevant management qualification.

At the last inspection, shortfalls in staff training and the frequency of supervision were identified. These have now been rectified. All staff, unless there is an unavoidable reason, are having supervision on a four to six weekly basis. Additionally, all staff are undertaking, or are registered on, the appropriate childcare qualification. These improvements have developed and supported staff practice and competence. Staff confirm that they feel well supported and that they find

supervision helpful in enabling them to raise any concerns or discuss issues. They also comment that mandatory training is regularly updated, such as fire safety, safeguarding, manual handling and physical intervention and that this ensures they remain competent and confident in their role.

The new manager has made other improvements in the home. For example, she has turned an office into a room which can be used for learning independence skills. Parents have been sent a short survey to enable them to express their views about the service in a formal way. The manager has also made staff more aware of the wider context of their work, for example, making available the external monitoring reports and the guidance under which they are inspected. Staff commented that they feel more empowered as they have been encouraged to share their views and take responsibility for particular areas of work. These are all very positive developments. However, she has only been in post a short time and has further plans to improve the service for the benefit of the young people.

External monitoring is robust and provides challenge. However, there are some shortfalls in the internal monitoring, particularly in relation to monitoring some records. For example, not all medical appointments were recorded in a young person's file and the files do not contain all the information required by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. Despite these shortfalls, the young people's records contain a lot of useful information which is supplemented by life story books and records of their achievements. This ensures they will have a helpful record of their time in the home should they choose to access this in the future.

The home has some shortfalls in its permanent staff complement, which are currently being addressed by using a small pool of relief staff. The relief staff are known to the young people and work regularly in the home so they provide consistency of care. The responsible individual is aware of the issues and is looking at ways of improving the situation. At present, the home will not admit any more young people as it has been agreed that staff could not provide safe care if any more young people were admitted, due to the high levels of supervision required.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.