

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC399222
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	West Sussex County Council
Registered person address	West Sussex County Council, Director of Social Services County Hall, Tower Street CHICHESTER West Sussex PO19 1QT
Responsible individual	Annie MacIver
Registered manager	Sharlene Kerry Vallance
Date of last inspection	13/01/2014

Inspection date	06/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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Young people make outstanding progress in all areas of their lives while living in the home. Young people benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with staff, who respond effectively to young people's views and actions. Young people learn to form appropriate social relationships through thoughtful staff support. Staff are demonstrably concerned for young people's well-being. The demeanour and actions of young people demonstrates they feel safe in the home.

Staff have built excellent working relationships with parents and carers including, outreach support in their homes. Additionally, joint working with education, the clinical psychologist and a range of specialist services ensures consistency in care and planning.

The management and senior teams recognise the strengths and weaknesses within the home and are keen to continually evolve and improve care and the service provided for young people. The staff team are extremely skilled and have access to a good range of training opportunities in order to provide the best quality care to young people. They say that managers and senior staff are approachable and that they are supported through regular supervision. Young people benefit from continuity in staffing, resulting in a consistent approach to care. Young people and their families are involved in service development through regular discussions and

formal consultation.

An area identified as requiring improvement as a result of this inspection is to ensure the décor is of a good standard throughout the building.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This service is run by the local authority, which is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three children with severe learning disabilities. The home particularly accommodates children on the autistic spectrum and can provide shared care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/01/2014	Interim	good progress
25/04/2013	Full	outstanding
09/01/2013	Interim	good progress
23/05/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Outcomes for young people using the service are outstanding. Young people develop increased self-awareness and social skills through targeted and consistent support. As a result they are able to build greater confidence in both domestic and social settings. Emotional well-being is central to all young people's plans and they receive excellent support via consultation with the Clinical Psychologist.

Young people enjoy good physical health and learn about healthy lifestyles and what this means to them. Young people enjoy a variety of fresh produce in home-cooked meals. One young person described his evening meal as 'nutritious'. Young people learn to cook, for example one made a fish dish for himself and a visitor. Young people are involved in a range of physically and emotionally stimulating activities in the home and community, such as cycling, trampolining, walks on the sea front and arts and crafts. A pop up tent is taken on community trips to provide a safe space should an individual become anxious or worried.

Young people are encouraged to make everyday decisions about their lives through direct support and tailored communication systems. Their views are sought for regular six weekly and statutory reviews and their wishes acted upon whenever possible. Young people make a positive contribution within the home, for example creating artwork and models for display.

Education is tailored to individual needs. Young people mostly attend special schools in the community, with support from the organisations teaching assistants. Young people who require it may access bespoke teaching in the home with an enthusiastic teacher and assistants who are creative in approach and engage young people with great effect.

Young people have excellent support to learn new skills for greater independence. Highly individualised support plans have resulted in many successes including learning to use speech and other communication tools, recognising emotions and social cues and using the toilet independently.

Quality of care **outstanding**

The quality of care young people receive is outstanding. Young people benefit from consistent and nurturing relationships with staff. They appear comfortable in staff's company, and staff are in tune with young people's needs and emotions. Staff are interested in all aspects of young people's physical and emotional well-being. Observations demonstrate staff are skilled in various communication techniques. Staff

understand individual needs and respond sensitively to them. Young people are comfortable gaining staff attention. Staff recognise when to leave individuals and do not push them beyond what they are ready to engage in. There have been no formal complaints from young people and their observations and comments are always welcomed.

Young people and their families are encouraged to contribute to six weekly and statutory reviews. Comprehensive care plans reflect agreed decisions and future targets. Creative behaviour management plans promote consistency in approach to unwanted behaviour. Positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and small rewards, unwanted behaviour is redirected. A variety of methods agreed, with the occupational therapist and clinical psychologist, reduce anxiety and physically challenging behaviour. The use of weighted blankets and self-directed calm areas are effectively deployed and managed in line with clear plans and protocols for safety.

Staff support young people in education through close consultation with schools and education professionals. The headteacher of a local school feels staff are 'very good' with sharing information, resulting in continuity in approach to reach young people's goals.

Young people learn about other cultures and beliefs through arts and crafts and themed celebrations. Recent displays in the home have celebrated Diwali and Halloween. Staff facilitate visits to the home from family and foster carers. Additionally they provide outreach in family and foster carer's homes. All visits are evaluated to ensure consistency in care in all settings. Parents have open working relationships with staff to ensure the best possible care and outcomes for young people.

The home is spacious with areas for individual time or group interaction. However some areas are tired and require redecoration.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people's demeanour indicates they feel safe in the home and they identify staff they can go to if they are worried or upset. Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare. Staff have an excellent understanding of each young person's vulnerabilities and are proactive in protecting them. Bullying is not a concern and issues within peer group relationships are managed swiftly.

Young people do not go missing from care. Should this happen, local police have clear plans of how to respond and understand individual's needs. The locking of external and internal doors has been agreed with social workers and parents. Their use is regularly reviewed with all professionals, to ensure it is still necessary to protect young people while allowing them freedom to move around the home.

Positive behaviour plans clearly identify how to de-escalate and redirect unwanted or challenging behaviours when young people are anxious or in crisis. Young people are encouraged to consider how future responses could be different. There is close working with behavioural specialists which reviews existing and emerging behaviours. The proactive response to unwanted behaviour results in limited use of restraint. The vast majority of incidents are resolved through agreed techniques, such as weighted blankets and calm talking. There have been three incidents during the summer holidays where doors were held or locked momentarily to prevent a young person accessing areas within the home. This was a response to extreme crisis and has not happened again since. Staff and managers have reflected on these incidents and new plans are in place, including reviewing the location of protective equipment to support individuals, to ensure doors do not need to be held in the future.

Policies within the home reflect the local authority guidelines on safeguarding and child protection. Individual risk assessments reflect vulnerabilities and behaviours that could place young people at risk. Risk reduction does not prevent young people engaging in age-appropriate activities. Young people are safe from fire and other hazards as a result of regular checks and procedures. The organisation's recruitment policy is thorough, including robust personnel checks.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The home is effectively run by a manager who was registered in February 2013. She has many years' experience working with young people and holds a level 4 management of residential child care qualification. She has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home and works tirelessly to continuously improve the service provided.

Reports in relation to visits made to the home to monitor its conduct in line with Regulation 33 are challenging and of a high standard. Quarterly evaluation of the manager's monthly monitoring highlights trends and patterns with clear links to the development plan. Within these quality assurance processes, the views of young people, their families and other stakeholders are considered. In order to constantly improve the service, all staff have projects to further improve experiences and outcomes for young people.

The Statement of Purpose is individualised to the home and reflects the service provided. Staff are knowledgeable of the aims and ethos of the service and work tirelessly to ensure an outstanding service is provided. The young people's guide is in a simple format which can be easily adapted dependant on individual communication style. The document contains information on both internal and external advice and advocacy services.

The home demonstrates a comprehensive approach to multi-agency working, leading

to improved outcomes for young people. Close working relationships, with specialist emotional well-being services, the looked after children's nurse and education in particular, enable consistency in approach and positive outcomes for young people. Services that are not performing are challenged when required. There have been no complaints regarding the home from parents, professionals or the local community and external relationships are positive.

The enthusiastic staff team are consistent and have a comprehensive understanding of the young people they care for. Recently appointed staff have assimilated into the team, providing seamless care. When agency staff are required, only those with a proven track record in the home are used. Staff say they are supported well by the management and senior teams. They receive the training they require to complete their jobs to a very high standard, with continued professional development encouraged. Formal supervision of staff is regular and provides sufficient challenge to continually improve practice. Annual appraisals include focus on development of roles and responsibilities for the coming year. Newly appointed staff complete an induction programme specific to the service, based on the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards.

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.