

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034210
Inspection date	21 July 2009
Inspector	Michael McCleave
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	26 March 2009
--------------------------------	---------------

© Crown copyright 2009

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 Cripins, 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 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

This Children's Resource Centre is run by a local authority and provides respite services to children with disabilities. The service can be offered for up to four children at any given time. The bedrooms for the children are designed for single occupancy. There are two bedrooms located on the ground floor and four further bedrooms on the second floor. There is a large enclosed garden to one side of the centre that has outdoor play equipment. There is a separate annexe to the building that has a sensory room and meeting facilities. This building does not currently enable children with a wheelchair to access these facilities.

Summary

At this unannounced inspection, all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service with some satisfactory features. The children are cared for by a staff team who take pride in their work, and there is a good friendly relationship between the children and the staff. Although the children only stay at the home for short breaks, they enjoy their time with the staff, and there are plenty of fun activities for them to participate in. Staff ensure that the children are safe and all have received training in child protection awareness. Ongoing developmental training is available for staff, some of which is accessed using the on-line computer system. Not all staff are familiar with this system. Staff work positively to ensure that the children are safeguarded, well cared for and that they have a lot of fun.

Staff are supported by the management team, and good leadership is provided by the manager who has a positive commitment on improvement.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to ensure that staff receive regular supervision, that fire drills are held regularly and to ensure that at least 80% of staff are trained to National Vocational Qualification level 3 in the Care of Children and Young people.

Staff supervision and fire drills are now carried out as required. There is an ongoing training programme for staff to complete the National Vocational Qualification at level 3. This remains an outstanding recommendation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There is a strong emphasis on ensuring the good health of the children. The meals provided for the children, ensure that a good balanced diet is always on offer, with choices each day. Staff are fully aware of those children who have special diets or eating disorders. Parents are consulted about their child's diet and kept informed if any eating difficulties occur. Menu planning is good and includes vegetables or salads each day. Any child from a different cultural background would have their own specially prepared meals. Staff would consult with parents to ensure that they are in agreement with meal preparations for their child. There is a good

understanding among staff about the need for diversity to be considered when planning meals. This promotes the welfare of all children regardless of cultural background.

The children have comprehensive health plans included in their case records. This information is clearly recorded and details how each child's health needs are to be addressed. Staff have been trained in medicines administration, and where required, they are trained to carry out complex medical tasks. Specialist health services are available, to ensure that all the children's health needs are appropriately met. The home has a medicines policy and procedure, and all staff have been trained to administer medicines. Medicines records are well maintained, and it is evident that staff take professional responsibility for ensuring that all medicines records are accurate and up to date. This ensures that the children's health needs are appropriately met at this home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The privacy and dignity of the children is respected, and they are able to enjoy time alone in private when necessary. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibility as professionals, to ensure that all information at the home is kept confidential.

The staff use a range of techniques to determine if a child is unhappy, and there is a complaints system in place using specialist communication tools. The protection of children is a high priority and staff demonstrate a very good awareness of the child protection procedures. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available to staff, and training in child protection is mandatory. Staff place importance on their intimate knowledge of each child, and are confident that they would identify any concerns of a safeguarding nature. The welfare of the children is further enhanced by the high staff ratio on rota, and this precludes the risk of any bullying taking place, or children going missing. The relationship between the children and staff is good and behaviour management is not generally regarded as an issue. Restraint is rarely necessary. This is good practice.

The home is a safe environment for the children, and appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that all safety appliances are in good working order.

There is a robust recruitment process in place. The appointment of staff to work at the home is only approved when all checks are completed. This includes verbal checks being carried out by the manager on all references and any gaps in employment clarified. This is good practice. The safety of the children is promoted by these detailed procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a high level of quality support during their stay at the home. Staff work with each individual child to maximise their enjoyment, and ensure that the children thoroughly enjoy their short break. Where required support for the children can be organised from outside professionals with the agreement of parents. During the school summer holidays, the staff organise a range of activities that provide the children with a lot of fun as well as achievements in some physical activities.

Although the education of the children remains the primary responsibility of each parent, staff provide support for the children in a variety of ways. This includes accompanying parents to meetings, attending school activities and supporting children to go on school trips. Good professional links have been established with the schools attended by the children. This promotes the well-being of the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The placement plan for each child identifies the support required to meet their individual needs. The key worker coordinator is responsible for ensuring that resources are provided as required. Staff use the plan to address the needs of the children including disability, race, culture, communication difficulties and physical needs. There are well established links with a range of agencies to support the children. This ensures that the children are provided with resources to meet their care needs and enhances their welfare.

There is a system for reviewing the children's placement plans. All the children are encouraged and supported to attend their reviews, as are their parents. Although the children have learning disabilities, the staff nevertheless ensure that the children, where possible, participate fully in their reviews. This is good practice.

Contact between the children and their parents is encouraged, and parents are welcome to visit if they so choose, although, most do not due to the short break nature of placements.

All admissions are planned in a sensitive way to ensure that the child settles at a pace that meets their particular need. This is carried out with care and sensitivity in order to enable the child, as well as parents, to become familiar with the staff and other children.

Although the majority of children have communication difficulties, staff nevertheless, ensure that consultation takes place with them about activities, trips to places of interest and general life in the home. The staff are positive about children having their voice heard, and to participate where possible in decisions that will affect their daily life at the home. This is very good practice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The responsibility for planning and preparation for adulthood rests with the parents and social worker. However, staff have a positive involvement where this is required. Information about how the young person has progressed during their time at the home, is shared with the transitions team social worker, to ensure that information is available to assist the plans for the next placement.

The building is not designed for children who have physical disabilities and, therefore, children who rely on wheelchairs, do not have access to the upstairs bedrooms. The building is well maintained and in a good state of repair. Bathrooms are suitably equipped with appropriate aids and adaptations. Children have single occupancy bedrooms. The annexe to the main building provides extra space for meetings and has a sensory room, however, it does not have wheelchair access, and this restricts access to the facilities for some children. There is a large secure play area in the gardens with suitable equipment for the children to enjoy. This ensures that children are safe whilst enjoying the play area.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

The local authority is actively encouraging staff to have a greater awareness of equality and diversity in their work, and training is available to develop staff understanding in equality and diversity. Good quality documentation is provided to all staff on this issue. There is a positive approach demonstrated by staff in their work with the children, that emphasises physical and learning disabilities, is not a barrier to achieving their potential.

The statement of purpose clearly outlines what service parents and the children can expect, and the children's guide is appropriately designed to inform the children all about the home. Both documents are detailed and informative.

The staff team have a range of experience in working with children who have learning and physical disabilities. Training is available for staff to develop their competency in this complex area of work, and staff are positively encouraged by their manager to attend relevant training opportunities. The local authority is increasingly using information technology for staff to participate in using on-line training. Some staff, however, are unable to take advantage of this form of training, and this restricts their ability to benefit from training and development. The home has 70% of staff who have completed the National Vocational Qualification level 3 in the Caring of Children and Young People. However, the priority currently, is for staff to complete the Children's Workforce Development Council training. There is nevertheless a commitment, that all staff will complete the National Vocational Qualification. This will enhance the competency of staff in their work with the children.

Staffing levels are appropriate to ensure the safety and well-being of the children. There are vacancies and interviews for new staff are at an advanced stage.

In order to maintain quality standards, the management team regularly monitor the work of the staff to ensure that the placements are appropriate and continue to be relevant. In addition, monthly inspections take place in line with Regulations to review the overall operation of the home. This promotes the safety and welfare of the children, and ensures that the service is operating in accordance with the statement of purpose. This is good practice. All appropriate information about the children is located in their 'This Is About Me' file and these records are well maintained. Reviews are held annually for each child to determine progress and suitability of the placement.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure 80% of care staff have completed an NVQ Level 3 In the care of Children and Young People (NMS 29.5)
- ensure all childcare staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the home. (NMS 31.1)