

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	3 February 2010
Inspector	Linda Brown
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	15 October 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 a large, spacious, detached house located near to the centre of a small town. There are a good range of local shops and community facilities. Public transport is easily accessible. To the front of the property is a car park with a grassed bank and conifers which create a natural barrier between the house and the road.

The setting provides accommodation for up to seven young people between 10 and 17 years. They have complex social, emotional and developmental needs and moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities. Some young people attend the home on a respite or part-time basis. All have their own bedrooms. Staff work in partnership with a variety of other agencies and in close cooperation with parents.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced interim visit was to examine some of the standards in the national minimum standards for children's homes and to monitor the home's performance against the action and recommendations made at the previous inspection in October 2009. Not all standards are examined during this inspection. The overall judgement of the home at the last inspection was good. During this inspection, medication, adequacy of staff, training and all key standards in staying safe are examined. The manager was present during the inspection and discussions also took place with staff. The management and staff are committed to providing excellent support for the young people in their care. Several areas were judged as outstanding at the previous inspection and positive outcomes for young people are still being maintained.

Judgements made at this inspection are outstanding for being healthy, staying safe and organisation. Positive contribution, economic wellbeing and enjoying and achieving are not judged. No actions or recommendations are made at this inspection.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager is committed to improving the service for young people and has been proactive in addressing the action and recommendations raised at the last inspection.

All relevant paper work provided by placing authorities relating to children now has the appropriate signatures, this includes consent for first aid and non-prescribed medication. Excellent impact assessments are now completed on all new admissions to the home and policies and guidance are available for staff if it became necessary to conduct a room search at the home. Fire drills are being held at different times of the day, to include a night time drills, in line with the standards.

Staff supervisions now record the length of the session to make sure that staff receive the appropriate level of supervision. Staff meetings are held every two weeks to ensure good communication is provided and staff are able to attend at least one meeting per month. Young people are cared for by management and staff who are keen to develop and improve the service they provide to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent systems are in place to ensure that young people's welfare is safeguarded. Staff have good knowledge of how to administer medication, store it safely and know how to appropriately dispose of medication and controlled drugs. Shortfalls in the system identified at the previous inspection regarding consent for administering first aid and non-prescribed drugs was addressed immediately. All drugs used at this home are prescribed due to the complex medical needs of the young people. Contact is maintained with health professionals who visit the home regularly. Staff receive the appropriate training in medication and first aid. Specialist training is provided as and when required. For example, training in specialist feeding techniques. Management are keen to continually develop the service and highlighted a need to be able to access information quickly in the event that a child has an emergency hospital admission. A superb hospital booklet is in place for each young person with all relevant medical details and contacts. This is updated regularly to provide staff with accurate information that is easy to access in the case of an emergency. This practice ensures that young people are provided with the appropriate medical care to meet their individual needs, these systems promote and safeguard their welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff continue to demonstrate a clear understanding of how to balance privacy, independence and safety in their day-to-day practice. They are able to provide excellent examples of how they work to ensure that the dignity of young people is maintained. Staff respect the wishes of the young people's families before providing any personal care. New staff are trained and young people are consulted before staff undertake these personal tasks. Confidential information is shared and stored appropriately.

There is a robust and effective complaints system in place which protects the welfare of young people. The manager is keen to resolve any concerns at an early stage and meets with parents and professionals to discuss issues and resolve any concerns they may have. The young people are regularly visited by a worker from an independent advocacy service who specialises in working with children with disabilities. The complaints procedure is translated into a pictorial form so young people with communication difficulties have alternative systems available to enable them to make a complaint or share their feelings.

Staff are trained and show a good understanding of the policies and procedures that are in place to ensure that children are protected from abuse. The manager passes any concerns immediately to the appropriate professionals and works closely with the safeguarding team to address any issues. The procedures in the home fully comply with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff continue to develop the facilities at the home to provide individual young people with keeping safe information at a level and pace that they will understand. Booklets seen are excellent and are designed specifically for each individual young person.

Although none of the young people currently living at the home abscond, there are appropriate policies and procedures in place. Staff are aware of the procedure if, for example, a young person failed to arrive home from school in their taxi. The systems and practice in place ensure that the welfare of young people is safeguarded.

Young people spend limited time together; their evenings are well planned giving them opportunities to take part in different activities. The close supervision of the young people makes the opportunity for bullying minimal. Risk assessments are in place and guidance is available for staff to follow if any concerns are identified.

Staff interact positively with young people. They have an excellent understanding of the needs and moods of the young people they care for. Behaviour management policies are robust and detailed strategies are in place for staff to enable them to create a safe, supportive environment for young people. Good behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Appropriate records are kept in the event of a young person receiving a sanction but very few sanctions are given. Behaviour management plans are formulated in consultation with parents, carers and relevant professionals. These plans are reviewed regularly and as a result staff manage incidents successfully by using approved behaviour management strategies for diversion or de-escalation. All staff receive training in the use of physical intervention and de-escalation and this training is regularly updated. Records are maintained of any physical interventions used and a system is in place to ensure that young people's views, after an intervention, are discussed and recorded. As part of the Regulation 33 and 34 checks and visits, restraint and sanction records are closely monitored to pick up patterns and trends. Any issues are addressed immediately and if necessary additional training is provided. This practice ensures that robust systems are in place to safeguard young people.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the home. For example, risk assessments are completed in relation to both fire and potential environmental hazards as well as individual child specific risk and impact assessments. Frequent checks are undertaken on fire equipment and emergency lighting and fire drills are regularly undertaken. Inspection certificates for all maintenance issues in relation to boilers, specialist equipment, gas and electrical equipment are available.

Procedures are in place to follow regarding the safe recruitment of staff. Staff recruitment records are maintained at the council's human resources department, these were not inspected on this occasion. However, no concerns were found at the previous inspection of these records. The manager is very involved in the process of recruitment and has a clear knowledge and understanding of the council's policies and procedures. This ensures the safety of the young people regarding the recruitment of staff. The manager maintains details at the home of staff Criminal Records Bureau checks in order to ensure that they are kept up-to-date. The manager is also provided with access to all recruitment checks once they are in place. Children's welfare is protected because there is careful selection and vetting of all staff working at the home prior to their appointment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

A Statement of Purpose is available for prospective young people, families, placing authorities and social workers which outlines the principles, practice and the services that they can expect from the home. Young people are provided with a colourful, child-friendly guide which includes different forms of communication. Staff are continually developing these documents to provide young people with as much information as possible in a format which they will understand. A display board is located in the hall with a range of information freely available to young people and this includes a copy of the young people's guide.

Management and staff continue to offer an outstanding level of care to the young people. The Registered Manager provides effective leadership of the staff team. He continues to take an active role in the day-to-day running of the home to ensure that staff provide the best possible care for the young people. He is now enrolled on and completing the Registered Managers Award. Staff rotas are structured to ensure that there are experienced senior staff available at all times and there are clear deputising arrangements in the absence of the manager.

Staff feel that they are provided with excellent support from the management team and this is evident when observing their practice. In addition to supervision, there is an open door policy so staff feel able to share opinions or ask advice at any time. Staff also feel that the support which they receive from each other enables them to provide a good constant approach with the young people. Handovers are well planned to ensure all information is exchanged and shared. Staff meetings are held regularly to ensure that good communication is maintained in order to provide young people with a consistent approach from a confident, informed and supported team of staff.

Records show that staff receive appropriate training. Staff state that there is a wide range of training available to them, mandatory training is regularly updated and new recruits complete all mandatory training as part of their induction. Specialist training is also available to ensure that staff are provided with the specialist skills to care for the complex needs of the young people. Staff are supported to achieve the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) award at level 3 in the Caring of Children and Young People award. Many of the staff have also achieved the NVQ award at level 4. There is an ongoing programme in place to ensure all staff complete their NVQ awards once their induction is finished. Concerns raised at the last inspection regarding training records are not fully met. However, this matter is being addressed and a new detailed system for recording is currently being introduced although it is not yet fully completed.

Young people's files are detailed, well maintained and stored in a secure place. Parents of young people are aware of the records held on their children. There are regular audits made on files and staff are aware of the importance of third party information

The manager and staff benefit from regular Regulation 33 monitoring visits. Reports are detailed covering all the relevant information. In addition, the manager completes his own monthly Regulation 34 monitoring checks. Both systems identify any areas in need of development as well as looking at any patterns and trends with young people's behaviours and recording practice. Copies of the Regulation 33 checks are sent to Ofsted.

Young people are making good progress because of the excellent management systems that are in place. Their learning is effectively monitored for their continued progress and this is discussed regularly within staff meetings. Staff observe children regularly and use observations to detail their progress. Children benefit because of staff's commitment to regularly attend training to update and improve their knowledge and practice.

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
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.