

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	7 December 2009
Inspector	Lucy Ansell
Type of Inspection	Key

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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

This home forms part of the services provided by the Children's Trust. The Children's Trust provides holistic services for children with multiple disabilities and complex health needs.

The school provides 52 week placements for pupils and is therefore registered as a children's home. This is in addition to being registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families as a non-maintained school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties with an age range between five to under 18 years.

The school has 44 educational placements. The registered children's home accommodates 33 pupils, in single or twin bedrooms. The boarding accommodation comprises a separate two storey purpose-built house for children up to the age of 16 years and a refurbished unit for young people over 16 years of age. Each house accommodates 11 pupils.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection, all the key standards over every outcome group were inspected. This is an outstanding service in all respects. The home's arrangements actively promote children's safety, protection and wellbeing. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the provision of well-trained staff who are professional and committed. The home works with a range of professionals in order to meet the young people's needs comprehensively. The placement plans are of an excellent standard and ensure the needs of the young people are met. The staff are well managed, supervised and supported by unit managers and the senior management team. No recommendations or actions were made.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was asked to ensure that the actions they take to minimise risk do not restrict the liberty of a young person. The home has produced a comprehensive reply which at present is being looked at by Ofsted, so for the purpose of this visit is being considered as met. All water temperatures are taken when bathrooms are in use and are duly recorded.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate excellent knowledge regarding young people's individual health care needs. These young people have very complex health needs and the actions that are taken to address these exceed normal good practice. Health care plans are kept under constant review, along with professional written records of all medication, treatment and first aid given to safeguard the young people. Young people with a disability and specific health needs receive appropriate support from a huge range of professionals. They run monthly clinics at the unit or are attached to the school and accessed by the children's home. Visiting consultants and doctors based on site provide guidance and further expertise to support the home's staff.

Medication administration is very sound; they have an organised and competent system, from ordering right through to disposal. All drugs are stored individually with individual records kept.

Monitoring and auditing is very good, with excellent practices in place. Should any error occur, this is well investigated and documented and staff are asked to reflect on their practice. Consents are in place for each child which cover all medical procedures. Staff are qualified to deliver all care needs and are supported by highly specialist health-related professionals. Training for first aid is provided for all senior staff running a shift.

The young people enjoy healthy nutritious meals that meet their varying dietary needs. Specialist feeding programmes are professionally delivered, recorded and reviewed as necessary. The kitchen is clean and tidy with food stored correctly. The two main meals of the day are provided by a central kitchen downstairs and brought up to the units on a heated trolley. The menus offer a varied and balanced diet, with choices from culturally different foods available. The children also access the local community to enjoy the restaurants. All staff at the home have a good understanding of the dietary needs of each child and what equipment may be needed to further support their independence. Staff receive training relating to food hygiene and feeds, and their observed practice was highly professional.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's privacy and issues of confidentiality are respected by staff following procedural guidelines. All personal information is kept securely in locked cabinets and drawers within locked offices. Mainly there are double rooms with young people sharing a room, and three young people sharing a bathroom. The bathing and personal care arrangements ensure the children's privacy and dignity is maintained.

There have been no complaints since the last visit. Many of the young people using the service have little or no communication skills and severe learning difficulties; however staff are able to respond to physical prompts that a child does not like something, because they have built up good relationships and communication with the family and the young person. The home can use a system based on cue cards, to enable the children to express their feelings and help make choices based on their wishes. Staff record after any activity whether the children liked it or not. The young people also have access to an independent visitor.

The home's child protection arrangements actively promote children's safety, protection and well-being. The home has a comprehensive child protection policy and procedure and has a copy of the local authority's procedures. Child protection policies and procedures have been communicated to all staff. Staff confirmed that child protection training is regularly provided. The school's headteacher takes a lead on any safeguarding concerns, and her deputy is also trained, should she not be available.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for dealing with bullying. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for intervening should bullying ever occur. Policies and procedures are in place for unauthorised absences. However as the children in the home have profound disabilities, and have very limited mobility, this is highly unlikely.

Children and young people's behaviour is extremely well managed by knowledgeable, competent staff who have the necessary skills and experience to meet the needs of the children and young people and clearly enable the home to achieve its aims and objectives. The staff respond in an appropriate manner to the children's behaviour. They ensure consistency in their responses to the children by discussing behaviours regularly at team meetings and in handover sessions, and

making sure that behaviour plans are comprehensive. Children, their parents and carers are fully involved in this process, ensuring that their wishes are taken into account. The children observed knew the staff well and looked happy, comfortable and at home in the unit. The staff all undertake training in behaviour management within the induction period and then update this training annually. Only approved clinical types of restraint are used which are applied mostly to protect children and young people from self injury; these are well recorded. Sanctions are not used by the home.

Health and safety is of a high standard across the board, and children and staff live and work in a safe and hazard-free environment. Regular safety checks are carried out on the gas and electricity supply, and on all portable electrical appliances used. The arrangements for keeping the children safe are excellent with all risk assessments in place. There is a health and safety committee which meets periodically, and audits on health and safety areas occur on a regular basis. All staff receive fire awareness and health and safety training. All fire drills, tests and checks are regularly completed.

Recruitment is managed by the Children's Trust's human resources department. The home has clear policies and procedures in place regarding the need to carry out thorough vetting of all staff prior to them working in the home. The personnel files of staff members contained all the required information and showed evidence of a careful vetting and robust selection process.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are committed to the children and young people and work with them in a diligent and professional way, showing patience, loving care and sensitivity. Staff speak with knowledge and authority regarding individual children's backgrounds and medical conditions and are clear regarding their future plans. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have. They ensure that the children have the individual support they need through the use of staff meetings, cause for concern meetings, comprehensive and informative daily staff handovers, and multidisciplinary working. Each child has a key and a co-worker matched to them who provide them with individual support and liaise between the school, their families and other professionals.

The education of the young people is actively promoted. The young people attend the school which is based on the same site. The school has developed the curriculum so it extends and develops the National Curriculum to include another five core areas: communication, sensory cognitive, social, motor and life skills. The curriculum is multi sensory in focus and flexible to the children's needs, and is worked on extensively throughout a 24 hour curriculum. The school and units have excellent communication and share special support assistants and staff who work between both sites. The home, school and the parents maintain communication through a book which travels with the child. This is updated daily and identifies all key issues.

The young people are encouraged to engage in lots of different types of leisure activities and develop confidence in their skills. The children are well supported and supervised by the staff when undertaking activities. Regular activities include ice skating, horse riding, bowling and cinema. During the weekend they usually like to go on trips out to the seaside or to local parks. The young people are also involved in the local community and have strong links with local schools. They make good use of the local facilities and enjoy going to concerts, and at this time of year, the pantomime and Christmas fairs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The admission and assessment process is detailed and thorough in covering all aspects of a child's needs and life, assessed by a multidisciplinary team. Individual communication methods are established prior to admission and developed further while at the home. It was clearly evident that much information is known about each child, and frequent meetings are held to discuss and plan for the children with complex health needs. There are excellent clear written plans outlining their needs and how these will be met. All information from the disciplines working with that child are sought and taken into account during all the key stages of the care planning and behaviour management.

All placement or behaviour plans are reviewed on a regular basis. All the children have key workers and all professionals involved in their care attend their reviews if possible. All statutory and home reviews are recorded on the young person's file and are up to date. The young people are encouraged to influence the care they receive as the staff have developed effective communication systems to ensure their views are heard. The young people are never assumed to be unable to communicate their views.

A strength of the units is working really closely with the families and encouraging and building on contact. The unit has an open door policy and during the inspection, many parents were seen on the units, chatting with staff and visiting their children. The young person's file clearly shows contact arrangements and details any restrictions. There are home/school books for messages between parents and staff with increasing use of emails. Each class has a parent representative who is usually a parent who has been at the school for a few years and can support new parents.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The young people live in a two storey, recently built, well-designed unit, that affords ample light and airy space for the children and young people. The third unit is equally nice, having been recently upgraded. All communal areas are decorated and furnished to a high standard and are extremely well maintained. There is a range of pictures, photographs, ornaments and art work displayed, comfortable sofas and relaxing areas, all of which provide a homely atmosphere. There are well-equipped sensory rooms in each unit and a multi-faith room which is available, which children and young people have access to 24 hours a day. There are single and shared bedrooms which are decorated and furnished to an equally high standard and are personalised for each young person to an excellent degree. Toilet and bathing facilities are of an excellent standard; they are equipped with a range of specialist equipment and afford good privacy. The bathrooms and bedrooms have overhead tracking systems in place. The outside courtyards and corridors have lots of sensory regard, with water and smell playing a strong part. The grassed area in the front of the units has play equipment suitable for wheelchairs and an interactive water feature is being built that can be walked through.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose is updated regularly to ensure all information is correct. The children's guide is available in pictorial format, but would be used by the majority of the users

of the service. Policies and procedures seen accurately reflect the services that the home is able to offer. The setting has a wealth of information available for parents.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The home actively promotes staff awareness of issues of discrimination, through policies, training and team discussions. They promote, through working practice, that each child is unique and a valued individual with the right to respect and positive self image.

Staff feel well supported and say that teamwork and staff meetings are seen as important and happen regularly. Staff receive formal, structured supervision on a regular basis. The home has an excellent training package from induction weeks, to all mandatory annual training and also specialist training given to staff to carry out complex health tasks. The home is well staffed with established teams that can provide a balance of relevant experience and competence at all times. The home's unit managers and the nurses and doctors provide clear arrangements for management and any medical cover outside of normal working hours. The senior management team are able to provide excellent direction and provide a strong visible presence on day-to-day matters. Virtually all of the staff hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 2 or 3 and all new staff will be enrolled once they pass their probation period.

The staff at the home are sufficient in number and experience to meet the needs of the young people. The staff team are very professional, caring and committed to ensuring the young people receive the best care. The home has an adequate number of staff at night with the arrangement of three waking members of staff per unit and the availability of an on-call manager.

The monitoring of the home takes place consistently to a high standard and ensures they are continually adapting and moving forward. The regulation 33 visitor is monitoring and signing the home's records and a good quality report is produced which is an aid for the units. Young people's case files ensure their needs, development and individuality are recorded to the highest standard.

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.