

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	16 June 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Joanne Vyas
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	27 January 2010
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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 run by the local authority. It provides short breaks for children and young people aged over four years who have a learning disability. Some children may also have a physical disability.

The facilities are provided in a large property near the centre of the village, close to shops, parks and local amenities. There is good-sized shared accommodation with quiet areas provided for children and carers. All bedrooms are single and bathrooms are equipped to meet the personal care needs of the children. There is a large, established and secure garden for young people, with activities suited to the children using the service, including a climbing frame and cycles. Eight young people were present for part of the inspection.

### **Summary**

At this full unannounced inspection all key standards were inspected.

This is an outstanding short-break service. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the positive relationships that exist between staff and young people, and between parents of young people and staff. There is a strong focus on meeting the needs of each individual young person including supporting and encouraging them to value their cultural and religious backgrounds. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout the standards inspected. Staff work in partnership with a wide range of outside agencies and parents in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Staff provide essential outreach services to families to provide guidance and support to ensure young people can thrive and make a positive contribution. The Registered Manager has a strong commitment and focus on improvement. A parent said, 'My child loves this home and I am confident the service is excellent and fit for purpose.' No actions or recommendations have been 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**

At the previous inspection, only one recommendation was made. This was to ensure all fire drills are recorded. All fire drills are now recorded.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff know what the young people like and do not like to eat. They also actively encourage young people to try new foods to ensure a more balanced diet. A parent said, 'Since going to this home, during his stays, he has been encouraged to try different foods. As a result he is more willing to try new foods at the home and has extended his diet choice with more variety.' Young people like the food provided at the home. They are provided with appropriate equipment to help them to eat their meals independently whilst the staffing ratio ensures they have the support where it is needed. Personal and cultural preferences are catered for as well as specialist diets, for example, staff are encouraging young people to sample foods from around the world using the World Cup as a theme. Young people are encouraged to shop for and prepare meals. A parent said, 'They take my daughter out shopping to the supermarket or into the village and

she has to help find the relevant items, put them on the conveyor belt and pay.' Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.

Staff are focussed and committed to ensuring a high quality provision for health care for young people living at this home. They are proactive and responsive to the emotional and health care needs of the young people. Staff work closely with all healthcare professionals involved in the care of each young person. Each young person has a comprehensive health plan which is up-to-date and states separate health needs including those arising from cultural needs.

The safe handling of medication is well managed in this home. The home mostly use prescribed medication. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication. Only the most senior staff on duty administer medication. Two staff always prepare and administer medication. Medication is accurately recorded, received and disposed of appropriately. The medication cupboards are secure. All accidents are recorded and first aid is given as appropriate. All staff are trained in first aid and renew their training as required.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. Staff are concerned about keeping young people safe and are competent in their knowledge of protecting them. Staff receive training on safeguarding young people as part of their induction and then at regular intervals. Staff provide essential outreach services and work in partnership with the local authority to assess and support young people in need in the community. They have a good knowledge of the bullying policy although they feel that bullying does not occur in the home due to the nature of the young people and the high staffing levels. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home. The high staffing levels, staff competence and the security in and outside the building ensure young people are safe.

No concerns have been raised by parents. A parent said, 'There is good communication between us so that we can resolve problems quickly.' Young people who make complaints are listened to and the procedures in place ensure complaints are appropriately and swiftly resolved. An advocate for the young people visits them on a regular basis to ensure their views are communicated effectively.

The privacy of young people is respected by staff. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and easily find privacy away from others if they wish. Staff ensure the privacy and dignity of the young people, such as by keeping bathroom and toilet doors shut when young people are receiving personal care. A parent said, 'My son needs a lot of help with his personal care needs and is helped in a professional manner with full respect to his dignity and privacy.' All records are kept confidentially. Young people's issues are not discussed openly.

Staff view young people positively and young people are relaxed around staff. Staff are given training, which includes de-escalation as well as physical intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. There is a minimal amount of physical intervention carried out in this home. A parent said, 'I know how staff are encouraged to manage my daughter's behaviour. They know potential triggers and encourage methods to avoid tantrums.' The behaviour management plans known as 'staff responses to identified behaviour' are comprehensive. Sanctions are applied fairly and appropriately although most young people are not given sanctions due to their level of understanding. Staff effectively manage challenging behaviour

in a calm and professional manner. High staffing levels, staff competence and comprehensive risk assessments ensure the safety of the young people who stay at this home.

Young people are protected by safe staff vetting procedures and monitoring of visitors. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau disclosure and two satisfactory references. All visitors sign into the building and must show identification.

The home has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments have taken into account the daily activities in and outside the home. All staff are given fire safety training and fire drills are carried out regularly and recorded. Fire safety equipment is checked as appropriate and a detailed record kept. Young people are protected by robust health and safety procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. Staff work in partnership with schools to ensure consistency of practice and to enhance the quality of care provided. This may include observing practice in schools, attending review meetings and liaising with teachers.

Individual support is comprehensively detailed in each young person's placement plan. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each young person's individual needs are fully addressed. Young people are encouraged to value their own culture, language and religion by a diverse staff team. The practical individual support is reflected in the variety of planning documentation that is in place. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have. Parents gave good examples of where their child's individual needs have been met by staff in the home. The staff know the young people well and are very knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care.

Staff provide a variety of activities for young people including trips out to local places of interest, the cinema and the theatre. They also have various activities within the home such as art and craft materials, games, books and DVDs. The extensive garden provides a safe and secure space for young people to run around as well as high quality play equipment such as swings, trampolines and bikes. All activities are well planned, risk assessed and carried out to ensure the young people are able to enjoy the activity safely. Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported by competent staff to engage in leisure and educational activities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the home's admission policy. Young people are fully supported during the admission process and when leaving the home. Introductions to the short-break service are carried out over a period of time suited to the young person, starting with a visit with parents and gradually building up to overnight stays. Leaving the home is marked with a party and a gift plus an album of photographs of their time at the home. Staff

carefully consider group dynamics when completing the booking process to ensure young people get along well together.

Staff provide a high standard of care to young people and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. A comprehensive assessment of need, residential action plan and risk assessments are in place for each young person. Staff work in partnership with parents, social workers, education and healthcare workers to ensure they have an holistic view of the child and therefore able to provide a high standard of care. Any changes to the residential action plans and risk assessments are effectively communicated to the team. A record is made throughout the day for each young person documenting their mood, activities, behaviour and other relevant information. Statutory reviews take place within the required timescale. A parent said, 'Our daughter is reviewed every six months and her keyworker will ensure she is supported in her likes. The home also attend my daughter's school review to continue what she does at school.'

Staff provide an essential outreach service, where required, to the families of the young people who stay with them. This ensures families are appropriately guided and supported to provide young people with consistent and quality care to ensure they thrive and reach their full potential. Parents all said that staff communicate with them regularly. A parent said, 'The staff at this home are excellent at communicating our son's problems, anxieties and achievements by telephone or by writing in his home diary. It is clear that the staff have his best interests at heart and that the staff care for him a great deal.'

Young people are given the opportunity to make choices and decisions through the use of appropriate communication systems such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and objects of reference. Young people recognise that staff are supportive in helping and guiding them towards making positive decisions for themselves. House meetings have just started which are carefully managed to enable each young person to make a positive contribution no matter what communication difficulties they have. Young people are relaxed in the company of staff and are quick to approach them with any issues they may have.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to carry out a variety of tasks independently or with support. These include personal hygiene, cooking, shopping and cleaning. A young person said, 'I sometimes go to Tesco or Asda if the cook needs anything.' Each young person's placement plan clearly identifies independence work young people are encouraged to carry out. Staff provide a consistent and committed approach, often taking the lead role, to enable young people's successful transition into adulthood. For example staff will visit potential placements with parents to provide guidance and support. They will also invite staff from a new placement to visit the young person at the home to increase their knowledge and understanding of the young person to ease the transition process. This also enables the young person to become familiar with new staff.

Young people live in a homely environment with high quality furnishings. There is a large amount of communal space. The young people have good facilities. Communal areas are personalised with artwork they have completed in the home. There is a large garden which includes a vegetable patch, a tepee, trampolines and other play equipment. The home is clean, tidy and well maintained.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a clear, up-to-date Statement of Purpose that reflects the practice and functions of the home. Parents are provided with a comprehensive admissions pack. Young people are provided with a user-friendly welcome book. The commitment to promoting equality and diversity is explicit in this information.

Staff training is supported by the organisation. An annual programme covers mandatory training which all staff are expected to undertake. Some staff initially complete a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 in the Care of Children and Young People after they have completed their probation period. The majority go straight onto NVQ level 3 or have completed this in addition to the level 2. Some staff have gone on to complete an NVQ level 4 in the Care of Children and Young People or Management. Young people are cared for by a qualified and competent staff team.

There are good staffing levels to meet the needs of young people. A record of staff shifts is maintained on the home's rota and this shows there is a balance of gender, age and cultural backgrounds of staff wherever this is possible. Staff hand-over meetings ensure that each shift is appropriately planned and issues arising from earlier are competently communicated. Young people's records are kept in good order and reflect all the information necessary for staff to care and support them throughout their placement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence supports a strong commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. The quality and detail of young people's plans also supports this commitment. Young people receive an individual service in the home which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have in-depth knowledge of the young people they are working with to ensure their needs are consistently met.

It is clear that the Registered Manager ensures effective monitoring of the home. This is evidenced by the regular signing of records as well as a monthly report. A senior member of the organisation also visits the home on a monthly basis and reports on the conduct of the home. These reports include discussions with staff and observations of practice. Staff are actively encouraged to look at ways of improving the service, for example, they have recently developed an 'ideas book'. A large number of parents have provided compliments to the home and congratulated them on their achievements. A number of parents also completed highly positive surveys for this inspection. Typical comments included; 'This home is a fantastic place. The service is vital to our family to help keep us going', 'Excellent and reliable respite service' and 'This is the best service for my family. The staff are professional and exceptional. The accommodation is perfect and even 13 years later, my son likes to be there. He mixes with his peers and relaxes with people who fully understand him.'

## 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
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## Recommendations

There are no recommendations.