

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Liz Daniels / Paul Taylor
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 setting is owned by a charity and is registered to accommodate 50 children and young people, male and female, with physical disabilities, complex health needs and learning disabilities. Accommodation is provided in individual bungalows which are staffed by experienced and qualified staff. On site is a non-maintained special school catering for children and young people aged three to 19 with complex special needs. There is easy access for wheelchairs around the site, including the living areas.

Five young people are accommodated for 52 weeks in one of the bungalows, all of whom were present during the inspection. Several young people who are older are also permanently accommodated in the other bungalows. As the inspection took place during the school holidays, those young people boarding during term time were not yet back at the setting.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This full unannounced inspection was the first visit to the home for the year April 2010 to March 2011, during which the key standards were inspected.

This setting provides a welcoming, pleasant and comfortable environment for the young people. A motivated and experienced staff team put in excellent measures whereby meeting the young people's individual needs is an integral part of how the home runs. They see their role as enabling each of the young people to 'have a voice', whereby their views are included in decisions made about them. They ensure they are kept safe, are healthy and are enabled to take part in a range of activities. The staff are also committed to supporting the young people in their learning and development as individuals, whereby they can achieve their full potential.

However, the bound books required by regulation to be completed for any sanctions given or physical interventions, do not include all the necessary information.

Improvements since the last inspection

One action was issued at the last inspection which has now been met. The registered manager had been asked to ensure there were suitable arrangements in place for the recording, handling and safe administration of any medicines received into the home. Since the last inspection there has been a medication review which has resulted in the development of far safer practices. Medication is now safely stored and administered by suitably trained staff. Careful and thorough recording and monitoring ensures the staff are responsive in identifying any discrepancies.

Similarly, two recommendations were also issued at the last inspection, both of which have been fully met. The manager was asked to ensure a written record is kept of medication not administered or refused. This is now practice and is also checked as part of the regular medication monitoring undertaken within each bungalow, throughout the day. The manager was also asked to ensure the staff were able to reference up to date policies and procedures; this was found to be the case during the inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Food is of a high standard and well managed. The young people enjoy varied, healthy meals which meet their dietary needs. They are sensitively supported during meal times and their food preferences are well known. Meal times are happy, well-ordered and sociable occasions when the staff and young people eat together. Staff have the required training in food hygiene and many have additional training in order to care for the young people's individual feeding needs.

Many of the young people have complex health needs which the staff explore. Health information is an integral part of their care plan, which outlines in detail the care required to meet their health needs. Illnesses, accidents or injuries are well recorded and body maps are well used as a record for any marks or bruises. Excellent liaison between the staff and health professionals enables continuity of care for the young people. The staff regard health promotion as an important part of each young person's care and accompany the young people to appointments when required. The overhead hoist system ensures all young people can use the excellent bath and wash facilities as well as be involved in activities arranged at the unit.

The setting has been thorough in their review of medication management and the creation of dedicated clinical rooms where medications are prepared, provide a much safer environment. Medication is appropriately stored in locked cupboards and excellent processes are in place for their safe preparation and administration. Any medication the staff administer is well recorded on each young person's medication administration record; regular monitoring each day enables an audit trail in the event of any discrepancies. Medications for disposal are recorded before being passed to the nursing team. Well-stocked first aid boxes are in the home. Good rota planning ensures staff trained in first aid, the management of medications and specific health care are always on duty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Privacy is respected by the staff team and sensitive information is stored securely. Clear guidelines are in place for the staff to follow; they ensure a correct balance between allowing a young person to spend time alone whilst ensuring their safety if

they are unsupervised. Detailed care plans outline how each young person prefers to be assisted with their personal care, ensuring that privacy, dignity and safety are promoted and protected.

The staff recognise that all the young people have the right to complain and that their concerns must be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon. Records confirm that the staff capture anxieties the young people experience and follow them up with the staff and young people. Similarly, records and discussions with parents confirm that their concerns are investigated and they are kept informed of any action taken. One complaint received by the setting since the last inspection has been well managed.

The staff recognise and know how to respond to safeguarding concerns. Good safeguarding measures are undertaken, whereby the welfare of the young people is promoted. A team of trained senior staff are always available to ensure that any concerns are promptly responded to and referred on when necessary. The home's policies and procedures are comprehensive, requiring that all staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure before employment. All the staff are trained in child protection. In addition, the local safeguarding children procedures are readily available for the staff to reference.

There is a policy and guidance for the staff to follow with regards to bullying. The cognitive disabilities of some of the young people mean that they do not fully understand the concept of bullying. The staff who work in the home are aware of the group dynamics, as well as which triggers can lead to behaviour which may cause distress or conflict between the young people. Close supervision and support of the young people ensures that incidents are kept to a minimum. Similarly, as the staff are very alert to the vulnerability of the young people, the risk of a young person becoming absent without permission is minimal.

There are very good measures in place to manage the young people's behaviour and these are resulting in minimal physical interventions or sanctions being needed. However sanctions and incidences requiring the use of physical intervention are not consistently recorded as required by regulation.

Detailed risk assessments are made with regards to the premises and activities which the young people take part in. They are regularly reviewed and updated. Additionally, individual risk assessments are completed on the young people; these balance their behaviour as well as their potential vulnerability in situations, such as swimming, bathing, eating and cooking. Similarly, their susceptibility to falls and accidents whilst using equipment such as wheel chairs or standing boards is well considered.

Well organised systems ensure that regular checks of the premises and safety equipment, such as fire alarms, are carried out. External professionals also underpin these checks with their own checks and tests. Fire drills occur on a regular basis. Each young person has a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan which outlines their particular needs and vulnerabilities if they have to be evacuated in an emergency.

Visitors to the site are well vetted and robust recruitment processes are undertaken to protect the young people. Visitors and contractors are well monitored; they are required to show evidence of identification, to sign the visitors' book and are supervised whilst on site. When staff are being recruited, all the necessary information is received prior to employment and discussions with staff confirm that the required checks are made.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person's individual needs are planned for in a detailed and thorough manner. Care plans are developed using information from the multi disciplinary expertise available on site. Close liaison between care staff, education staff and medical staff, underpinned with information from parents, ensures that all aspects of each young person's complex needs are met to an excellent standard.

It is clear that the communication needs of young people are of paramount importance in meeting and understanding their needs. Staff have a keen appreciation of how each young person expresses their individual wishes or feelings and respond to them accordingly. The young people are not all able to verbalise their needs; however, staff are acutely aware of the subtlety and manner of communication preferred by the young person in question. The use of symbols, pictures and augmented communication is encouraged and developed; the young people are supported and guided to utilise and learn the most appropriate format for them.

Each young person has a completed and up to date education plan that details how their educational needs will be met. Education plans are reviewed regularly and close liaison with the school is maintained. The atmosphere within the home and the approach taken by staff encourages young people to participate in and enjoy their education. Targets are shared between the school and the residences to ensure that the young people benefit from a cohesive and consistent approach and are able to develop their life and social skills in both settings.

The individual support offered to the young people enables them to participate in a variety of interesting activities. The robust risk assessment process and knowledge of the young people ensures that their right to enjoy a community presence is promoted and valued. Activities enjoyed by them include swimming, bowling, shopping, and trips to local festivals and events. On site facilities are excellent and include a swimming pool, horse riding and an adapted play ground. Similarly, listening to music, playing on the computer and watching DVDs are also popular in the home. The right of the young people to choose to take part in activities or to opt out, is valued and promoted.

The support that the staff give to the young people, and the opportunities given to them to achieve and experience positive education and activities, is a strength of the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

A structured approach towards care planning, assessment and review ensures young people have their particular needs assessed in a detailed and thorough manner. The assessment of their physical, medical, social and educational needs enables them to access the services they require once admitted; this assessment then provides the basis for a detailed care plan. The plan clearly describes how staff should care for the young person with a key focus on their communication needs, abilities and complex health needs.

Regular reviews of care ensure care plans match the current needs of each young person in an individualised fashion. Reviews involve input from care, educational and health professionals to ensure that each young person's needs are thoroughly assessed and their progress, likes and dislikes are contributed. Any changes in care are then reflected in an updated plan of care.

Contact arrangements are known by the staff team and they support the young people to have regular contact with their families. The home is welcoming for families when they visit and records of supervised contacts are maintained. Any restrictions on contact are known by the staff team. Appropriate policies and procedures underpin the practices in place.

Young people are only admitted into the home once a full and comprehensive assessment of their care needs has been completed. Admissions are carefully considered and the process is planned commensurate with each young person's ability to deal with the transition.

Members of staff know how each young person communicates. Some of the young people develop idiosyncratic ways of communication and these are recognised by the staff working with them. The staff encourage the young people to have a voice in the running of the home, especially by responding to their likes and preferences around food and activities. No young person is assumed as not being able to communicate. The staff knowledge of each individual, together with an embedded ethos of valuing the young people's opinions and feelings, ensures that they are able to express how they feel they are being cared for and how the home is being run.

Staff interaction with the young people is sensitive and supportive, allowing them to make choices whilst ensuring that their safety and well-being is protected and promoted. The young people are seen to be relaxed in the company of the staff who care for them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The setting offers a high level of service in preparing the young people for adulthood. Excellent arrangements are made whereby the young people can stay at the setting for as long as is required until an adult placement is sourced. Their needs are held at the forefront of any discussions about a future placement; in the meantime, there is thoughtful planning of activities, pastimes and learning to ensure the young person is as prepared as they can be and that they have a smooth transition.

The setting provides comfortable accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a very good standard. It is situated in a rural area but within easy reach of shops and facilities; several bungalows all within the school campus, provide accommodation for small groups of young people. There is a garden area which provides a safe space for relaxing and recreation; further grassed areas also then have excellent activity equipment that is suitable for young people with varying needs and disabilities. Ample communal space enables the young people to play together, relax or have some quiet time alone. Spacious wash facilities and the overhead hoist system enable all the young people to share all the facilities and take part in all the activities. Each young person's bedroom is nicely personalised to suit them.

The general décor, furniture and furnishings of the bungalows make them welcoming, pleasant and comfortable with excellent facilities for the young people. Repairs are undertaken promptly whereby the interior and exterior of the properties are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose reflects how the setting operates, how the young people will be cared for and what services they can expect. The young people's guide in picture and word format is also comprehensive.

A knowledgeable, experienced and well qualified manager leads the staff team; she is supported by a knowledgeable and experienced deputy who takes a lead in the operational day to day running of the bungalows. Each bungalow then has its own team of staff ably led by capable and competent team leaders. As part of the recruitment process, staff are asked to commit to studying for their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3, once they have completed their probation.

There are sufficient staff rostered to care for the young people and meet the home's Statement of Purpose. A flexible approach to staffing ensures additional staff are available during holiday times or if the dependency of the young people increases; any shortfalls are covered by the permanent staff undertaking extra duties as a

'bank' shift. There is an excellent programme of training available for the staff, enabling them to be updated in key areas. In addition, robust timetabled supervision and performance management reviews ensure the staff team is well supported and any training needs are identified promptly.

Quality assurance and reflection on practice is fundamental to how the service runs. There are very good monitoring processes in place to monitor the care of the young people as well as the home's performance against its Statement of Purpose. The required records are reviewed and signed; the frequency of events and any trends are also identified. They are then reviewed with the staff whereby their significance is recognised and appropriate action taken. Monthly monitoring visits are also undertaken by one of the senior staff within the organisation and any recommendations made are acted upon. In addition, the governing body play an active role in monitoring practice, through visits as well as reviewing the reports produced, to ensure there is continuous improvement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding; the young people accommodated have disabilities but all are treated equally. The staff recognise their individual needs and are proactive in ensuring their diverse needs are met. The ethos of the setting is to recognise and support the different views, needs, cultures, language and faiths of any young person accommodated there. A mixed staff team ensures that the individual personal, social, health and emotional needs of each young person are explored and care given to meet them.

All the young people have comprehensive individual files that are a permanent secure record of their history and progress. They are stored appropriately but can be shared with the young people if requested and with staff support.

Although there are many areas of very good practice within the inspected standards, the impact of shortfalls under 'staying safe' have been taken into account when judging 'organisation'.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
22	maintain an accurate and up to date record of measures of control used, as set out in Regulation 17. (Regulation 17)	01/10/2010