

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	28/11/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Tola Akinde-Hummel
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	24/02/2011
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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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

**Satisfactory:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is run by a local authority and provides care and accommodation for five children with physical and learning disabilities

### Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Children and young people receive a short break in a home that is consistently described as warm and welcoming with kind and helpful staff. This is an ideal environment for children with complex needs to stay when away from their relatives and carers. One social worker stated, 'The service has had a positive impact on young people, but also their immediate family and this helps strengthen relationships between them all.'

Staff are well established in the home and operate in a professional manner. This means there is a high level of consistency of care for children and young people and familiar, knowledgeable interaction with external partners.

Children and young people are safe during their stay and have the opportunity to make friends, participate in activities and get to know adults involved in their care.

Children and young people are encouraged to express their feelings about any aspect of the service and how they can contribute to the development of the home. The independent advocacy service means that regular external checks assess the suitability of the service from children and young people's perspective.

The home are required to send regulation 33 reports to Ofsted and complete more detailed monitoring reports.

### Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the regulation 33 report to Ofsted at least once a month ( Regulation 33 (5)(a))	30/12/2011
34	establish and maintain a system for monitoring matters set out	30/04/2012

(2001)	in schedule 6 at appropriate intervals and supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him (Regulation 34 (1) (2))	
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## Recommendations

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

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

During their short break, children and young people are supported by staff who understand their background and support them to maintain optimum health. The home has the necessary aids and adaptations to facilitate their care and make children and young people as comfortable as possible. Children and young people are provided with healthy wholesome meals which take health needs, preferences, and religious requirements into consideration.

Relationships between schools and the home continue to improve. Good practice is shared and children and young people receive a consistent approach to their care which is understood and agreed by all parties. One head teacher stated, 'Our relationship with the home is fine, short break reviews are held at school, they attend annual reviews and the manager and deputy are exceptionally good.'

Children and young people engage positively in the community through leisure activities facilitated by the homes mini bus. Children and young people are involved in fundraising to support a local charity of their choice. This gives children an opportunity to connect with the community and contribute to it.

Children and young people make good use of the 'voice group' where consultation on a number of issues takes place. These range from opinions about furniture and fittings to exploring equality and diversity. Children and young people who do not use verbal means of communication are routinely included in this process to ensure consultation in the widest sense is achieved.

Young people have an independent advocate available to them who visits every month to elicit their views and satisfaction with the service. The independent advocate said, 'I spend a lot of time talking to and observing young people. There is always a lovely atmosphere, friendly and welcoming. There is always something planned and all children and young people are supported to participate.'

### Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Children and young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. The interactions observed demonstrate a warmth in the relationships. One parent said, 'My child is very happy going there, the home has done my child a lot of good.' One young person said, 'I have loads of fun when I stay, I love going there.'

On a daily basis children and young people are encouraged to make choices. Verbal communication and visual aids support this. There is a complaints procedure which children and young people are able to use. This is openly displayed in the home in written and pictorial form.

In partnership with parents and other professionals, care plans identify the needs of children and young people. Children and young people are supported according to the information recorded in their care plans. These are detailed and informative. In addition pen pictures are available giving quick relevant information. Where there are changes to their care, plans are updated and information is disseminated without delay.

Children and young people bring with them a variety of medication that is properly recorded stored and administered. Any additional health needs are discussed with their families and medical professionals. One nurse said, 'The home have excellent shared care practice, they are very organised and have good communication.'

Children and young people have behaviour management plans where this is appropriate. Complex behaviour is managed through close observation, external guidance and clear plans which focus on triggers, distraction and de-escalation. This strategy reduces children and young people's anxieties to ensure they experience a positive stay in the home. Children and young people are not sanctioned.

Children and young people have adequate space around the home and in the garden to enjoy. There is a variety of equipment and materials available to keep them entertained. Murals in the garden incorporate contributions by children and young people. The introduction of the vegetable garden enables children and young people to get involved in growing food which is then served at mealtimes.

Children and young people have their short break in clean, comfortable and homely accommodation that blends into the neighbourhood. Bedrooms are themed and children and young people are having ongoing discussions about redecorating some of these.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Children and young people indicate that they feel safe and relaxed during their short break. Feedback from parents confirms this. One parent said 'We went abroad for five nights, our child knew where we were and they were fine.' Another parent commented, 'My child is always happy to go there and on occasion been unhappy to

return home preferring the company of the staff and the children. I think they deserve praise for their efforts.'

Given the high staff to children ratio and the disabilities that children and young people have, there is little risk of children and young people going missing. The home has the relevant protocols in place should this occur.

Children and young people enjoy a short break in an environment where staff are vigilant about bullying or the potential for children and young people to be excluded by others. Short-break bookings are organised to ensure children and young people are able to get the most out of their stay. Friendship groups, similar interests and abilities and individual sensitivities are considered when organising which children and young people experience their short break stay together.

Staff get to know the children well over time and are very sensitive to their vulnerabilities. A number of children are unable to express themselves verbally, so staff have developed the skill of understanding individual communication methods. These include gesture, body language and mood. This helps to make sure children and young people's needs conveyed are understood.

Detailed risk assessments identify strategies to manage risk safely and effectively. These are working documents reviewed routinely or as the need arises. Staff are trained in de-escalation and distraction techniques and do not use physical intervention to manage behaviour.

Children and young people are supported by staff who understand the importance of safeguarding. This is enhanced through training and policies and procedures put into practice. Staff appropriately share concerns and work well with parents and other professionals involved in the welfare of children and young people. One social worker stated, 'The home communicates very well. I have never had any concerns about the home.' The local authority designated officer summarised, 'The home have good detailed recording and they are sensitive to the issues affecting children and young people.'

One member of staff has been recruited since the previous inspection. Records show that robust procedures are in place to ensure that staff are properly checked prior to employment.

Children and young people enjoy their short break in a home where their health and safety is properly considered. Fire drills are undertaken in challenging circumstances at different times to ensure that staff know how to protect children and young people. This practice is underpinned by personal emergency evacuation plans completed for all children and young people. Regular checks are carried out which include mobility equipment, water, gas and electrical safety.

## **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The recently revised statement of purpose sets out the aims and objectives of the service. This allows parents and carers to make an informed choice about the suitability of the home for their children. The children's guide has been translated into an audio format by a young person using the service to increase its accessibility to children and young people.

The Registered Manager and deputy manager support staff manage the home effectively. Managers lead by example and support staff to undertake their roles through the provision of training, supervision and regular team meetings. Parents comment on the friendly, polite and professional attitude of staff towards them.

Staff feel valued by their managers and say they are happy with the support they receive. Staff are allocated additional responsibilities which contribute to effective running of the home. There is a good relationship with the borough councils and a positive approach to multi agency working assists in meeting the needs of children and young people and their families.

Children and young people are supported by a long established staff team. Staff have relevant skills and qualifications to support the children and young people during their short break.

Children and young people treated as individuals and staff take the time to encourage them to participate in activities of their choice and where possible develop their independence skills and their personality. Equality and diversity is celebrated in the home and religion, race, disability and culture do not hinder the development or contribution that children and young people make.

The service has made some recent improvements including the development of new documentation, additional activities and improvements to the building. Regulation 33 reports have been completed and provided to the home but these have not been received by Ofsted for some months. Regulation 34 reports are monitored but these are not sufficiently detailed. This means the home cannot demonstrate that any emerging trends and areas for improvement in care practice are identified.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.