

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Angela Whiteley
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six children and young people with physical and learning disabilities and complex health needs. The home is managed by a private organisation.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people have highly personalised and well-planned care. Comprehensive risk assessments and care plans enable staff to fully understand and meet children and young people's individual complex needs. Documents are reviewed regularly to keep children and young people safe. The dedicated staff teams have a wealth of experiences and knowledge. They receive specific training that ensures they have the level of skill required to care for children and young people who have profound physical and learning disabilities and highly complex health needs.

Children and young people make excellent progress in an environment that is calm and yet highly supportive. Staff promote individuality and show high regard for children and young people's dignity helping them to develop a positive self-image. Children and young people benefit from the effective application of policies, procedures, systems and practices. This helps staff to safeguard and promote children and young people's welfare. However, there is no agreed policy in place in respect of the use of electronic monitoring devices, which are regularly in use to ensure children and young people are safe.

Children and young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff that they trust to keep them safe. Parents have commented that, 'this is a number one family home' and 'staff show dedication'. A placing social worker feels that, 'staff always communicate very well with children, irrespective of the child's ability to communicate back'. Staff support children and young people to develop new skills at their own pace, through a range of new experiences. Staff use a variety of communication techniques, such as gestures, language and pictures to consult with

children and young people about their care. This ensures their views carry weight and their needs are central to the smooth running of the home.

The Registered Manager demonstrates strong leadership and is committed to developing a skilled and knowledgeable staff team who aspire to support children and young people to make positive progress and achieve their potential. Further areas for improvement include a review of the Statement of Purpose and provisions for regular supervision of new staff. These shortfalls have minimal impact on children and young people.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure where electronic monitoring devices are used, there is a written policy that sets out how they should be used (NMS 10.5)
- ensure the home has a clear Statement of Purpose (NMS 13.1)
- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision, in particular new staff and that written records are kept. (NMS 19.4 and NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The outcomes for children and young people at this home are exceptional. All children and young people have access to a broad range of specialist health professionals who provide support and advice for complex health care needs. This enables them to live within a family environment with high levels of support rather than remain in a medical setting.

Staff receive the necessary training and are competent to support children and young people with their medical equipment and procedures. They recognise and attend promptly to any health issues to ensure children and young people maintain the highest level of physical and emotional health. Detailed health assessments provide clear information for staff enabling them to manage the daily care needs of children and young people. Assessments are regularly reviewed.

Medication is stored securely and effective measures are in place to ensure the safe administration of medicines. Staff have appropriate training and records are clear and countersigned ensuring children and young people's health and welfare is safeguarded.

Staff support children and young people who are of school age to attend education.

Staff have excellent links with school staff and attend school meetings. Communication methods are discussed to ensure a consistent approach is used in each setting. This helps children and young people to express their views more clearly. A recent transition plan has been successful in enabling a young person to attend school for the first time. The young person was able to contribute her views and make decisions that influenced the planning. Another young person will transfer to further education with support from staff.

Young people benefit socially from attending holiday clubs and after-school clubs. These are significant achievements for these young people. Pre-school provisions are in place for younger children to attend. These arrangements support their overall development needs. Those who are no longer in statutory education continue to receive support to develop their skills and experiences to help them to move on into adult life. Young people have access to their own transport, which widens the opportunities available.

Staff support children and young people to access the local community and to take part in a range of activities. Examples of this include, shopping, cinema, pamper sessions, shows, walks, visit to the park and farm, trips to the zoo, day out on a barge, and weekends away in self-catering cottages. Risk assessments are in place for all activities. Children and young people are able to choose the activity they would like to do which promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

Children and young people have a strong sense of identity, reinforced by regular contact with their family. Some contact arrangements are restricted and staff are fully aware of the restrictions in place. They offer parents a warm welcome into the home, while ensuring the safety of children and young people at all times. Transport is available to facilitate contacts away from the home where required.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people show they are happy living at this home by their gestures, facial expressions and sounds. They often come to the home having spent long periods in a hospital setting. They receive high quality care from a staff team that they now know well and are comfortable with. Some children and young people come to the home less often for respite care. They receive the same high standard of care as those who live there more permanently. A parent has said, 'her child is very happy at this home'.

Children and young people are cared for by small staff teams who develop a detailed knowledge of their care needs. They have excellent relationships with staff. Staff have developed individualised communication techniques which allow children and young people to express their views and feelings and contribute ideas for the running of the home. Young people choose how they personalise their bedrooms and are supported in making other decisions about their care. The complaints procedures are included in the children's guide. Children and young people are supported by staff

and have access to independent advocates to allow them to express their concerns more clearly.

Staff are proactive in their support of children and young people's education, health and activities. They promote diversity and cultural needs through detailed placement plans. Inclusion is an important aspect of all areas of care planning. Multi-agency professionals regularly review plans to reflect children and young people's current needs. This ensures children and young people receive continuity of care and support at the level they require.

Children and young people are able to develop in a caring and nurturing environment commensurate with their age and understanding. They live in a well- designed home that offers a spacious living environment. All areas are accessible by all children and young people. The home is exceptionally well maintained, furnished and decorated and presents as a warm, welcoming and child-friendly home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people who live in this home are safe. They are protected from harm by competent carers who treat their safety and well being seriously. Staff fully understand safeguarding policies and procedures and receive quality training to enable them to respond appropriately to any concerns about young people's welfare. There are no child protection referrals or issues of bullying at this home.

The home use baby monitors to ensure children and young people are safe when in their bedrooms. This quickly alerts staff to any breathing difficulties or medical machinery malfunction. However, the home do not have a policy regarding the use of electronic monitoring equipment.

Comprehensive individual risk assessments and crisis management plans are in place and are reviewed regularly by the manager. This helps to protect children and young people from harm. Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of children and young people and take appropriate action to address them. All children and young people are closely supervised and any inappropriate behaviour is managed sensitively. Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint, which is only used in the event of a young person being at risk of self-harm. There are no incidents of young people going missing from home and sanctions are rarely used.

Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and visitors to the home are checked and supervised as appropriate. These practices ensure children and young people are protected from people who may pose a risk of harm. Children and young people's safety within the home is ensured through the routine testing of electrical, gas and fire equipment. Health and safety guidelines are followed and there is effective assessment in place of any hazards in the home.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from strong leadership from a suitably qualified and experienced manager, ably assisted by a qualified deputy manager. They understand the needs of the children and young people and have clear expectations for the smooth running of the home.

Staff have appropriate qualifications. Where required, new staff are quickly enrolled on the Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma with the full support of the management team and in line with standards. Children and young people benefit from the home's strong commitment to staff training and development, particularly in respect of complex healthcare. This ensures staff have the correct skills to support children and young people to achieve their potential. Although staff receive regular supervision and support, which ensures they have the opportunity to develop their practice this is not being consistently recorded, particularly for new staff.

The home is well resourced and employs a high staff ratio. Any shortfalls in staffing are covered by existing staff. This ensures children and young people are cared for by staff that know them and can respond effectively to their needs. The staff team has a good balance of gender, age and ethnicity who are positive role models. This meets the aims and objectives of the home's Statement of Purpose. However, not all information in this document is not up to date, particularly in respect of the information about staff.

Records held on young people and children are extremely detailed and present a good overall picture of their experiences at the home. Children and young people are supported to give their views about their care and staff actively involve parents in this process. Records are maintained to a very high standard and information is well organised.

Robust monitoring systems ensure that children and young people enjoy high standards of care. Monthly monitoring reports review the home's performance, children and young people's progress and identify areas for improvement. Consultations with children and young people, parents and other professionals influence the progress of the home. The manager fully understands the strengths of the home and actively addresses areas where improvements can be made. The home has a comprehensive development plan that is reviewed regularly to help drive forward further improvements. A requirement raised at the last inspection has been addressed showing the service is committed to continually improving their provision. There is a complaints procedure in place, which addresses complaints speedily and appropriately.

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.