

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037521
Inspector	Debbie Foster
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Riverside House Main Street ROTHERHAM South Yorkshire S60 1AE
Responsible individual	Clair Pyper
Registered manager	Darren David Higgins
Date of last inspection	13/02/2014

Inspection date	18/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None has taken place.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people benefit from the care and support of a staff team who are child focussed, who have experience in caring for young people with learning disabilities, autism and complex health needs. The staff team has been enhanced by new members to provide young people with a full stable staff team who can provide consistent care to young people. This enables young people to make progress in a number of areas, including developing their personal care skills, improving their behaviour, independence and social skills.

Strong nurturing and positive relationships exist between the staff and young people. Young people have an active say in how they are supported on their stays and the activities they wish to do. Parents say their children look forward to visiting the home, to meet up with friends, staff and enjoy the activities. This assists young people to feel listened to; in building trust and enables them to work with staff well.

The environment is maintained to a high standard, with lots of activities for young people to participate in. Health and safety matters within the home are well maintained and effective, keeping young people safe.

The manager and staff are very effective in providing individualised and well planned care based on the diverse needs of young people. Staff work closely with parents,

schools and other professionals to support young people to achieve. Young people have their needs assessed well. These are used to inform detailed written placement plans Staff use these plans very well to support and achieve positive outcomes for young people.

The management arrangements have secured some improvements since the last inspection. This includes training, filling staff vacancies, reviewing risk management and some improvements to management monitoring. There has been one failure to abide by the Statement of Purpose with regard to ongoing care rather than providing short breaks. There have been minor gaps in frequency of staff supervision and training. Monitoring processes still have some shortfalls. These issues have not impacted on the care of young people but have resulted in leadership and management being judged as adequate.

A further recommendation is made regarding the timing of young people's meetings. These take place on one set day of the week. This does not allow all young people to participate in giving their views to influence changes in aspects of the service.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a short break service run by a local authority, providing care and accommodation for young people with learning and physical disabilities. This service also has an emergency bed which can be used for a 12 week period.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/02/2014	Interim	good progress
01/05/2013	Full	adequate
09/01/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
19/07/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
4 (2001)	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its Statement of Purpose. In particular that the 12 week specified period for the use of an the emergency bed is adhered to (Regulation 4 (6))	28/10/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that persons employed at the home receive appropriate, training, supervision and appraisal. In particular, that all staff, including agency staff, receive supervision at the frequency specified in the homes policy and procedure (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	28/11/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent person, when carrying out visits shall report on how children	28/10/2014

	accommodated at the children's home are effectively safeguarded and that written reports of the visit are supplied to HMCI at the stipulated frequency. (Regulation 33 (8) (i) & (9) (a))	
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person's monitoring system shall improve the quality of care provided in the children's home and shall also supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted. This shall be supplied at three monthly intervals. (Regulation 34 (1) (b) (2))	28/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- build further mechanisms to allow all children to communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. In particular ensure that the young people's meeting takes place at times to allow all young people to participate (NMS 1.3)
- build further on the quality learning and development programme which staff and volunteers are supported to undertake to ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the setting. In particular ensure all new staff receive behaviour management training as part of their induction. (NMS18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people look forward to and enjoy their short break visit. A parent said, 'the care given is absolutely brilliant...he loves visiting and this is a big relief to me,' and a young person said 'I like it at (name).' Young people seen visiting were smiling; calm and actively interacting with staff, playing and taking part in activities of their choice.

Young people benefit greatly from the relationship they have built with staff, the increased life experiences; the opportunity to meet with their peers and make new friendships. This enables young people to develop a positive self-view and build on their emotional resilience through the relationships and attachments that are built.

For most of the young people who attend for short breaks, their health and education is the responsibility of their parents. Young people's health is enhanced by the knowledge and support that staff have with regard to their health conditions. Medication is administered and health interventions are carried out where required. Young people benefit from staff having a good awareness of their individual disabilities and conditions. This ensures the care and support young people receive is appropriate to meet their diverse needs. Positive relationships exist between the home and the family, with strong links in place with health professionals. As a result, staff keep fully up-to-date with the young person's state of health and, consequently, can care appropriately for them.

Young people continue to have excellent attendance at their education setting during their short-breaks. This is actively promoted by the staff. The home has good effective communication and relationships with all the schools to ensure young people's education is effectively supported and encouraged.

The majority of young people live at home with their parents or carers and staff maintain good contact with families. Contact is maintained by telephone and daily diary during the young person's stay. A parent said, 'I can phone to check how my child is; the staff always give me a full update and all know him well.' Another said: 'Communication is very good, I am kept informed by the home diary and by telephone. The staff phone me to check things out or pass on information.' This enables an exchange of information which benefits young people as all parties actively work together in the child's best interest.

Young people benefit from a range of activities in the home. For example, there are opportunities for playing games and access to sensory toys, a computer, electronic games, a garden with play equipment, arts and crafts. A sensory room is available for young people to use. Young people have suggested new garden equipment and Ipads, which have been purchased. Young people enjoy playing on the trampoline and tricycles in the garden. They also access inclusive community activities these

include: going on trips to the coast; drives in the mini bus and calling to the ice cream parlour; and trips to local parks and wildlife facilities. This gives young people notable stimulating opportunities to promote their development, enjoyment, independence and social skills that may not otherwise be available to them routinely.

Young people over time make good progress in developing personal care, independence and social skills. This supports them to take a more active part in their own daily life and in turn enables them to participate in the wider community.

Quality of care

good

Staff are dedicated, caring and want the very best for young people. They work hard to ensure that young people are supported in their daily lives to enable them to succeed. Consequently, the well-being of individual young people is central to the good quality of care practice in place. Young people greatly benefit from visiting a very positive and happy nurturing environment with clear structures to meet their individual needs. Staff recognise the importance of building strong relationships with young people and these exist. As a result, young people thrive and overtime reach the goals identified to enhance their social and life skills.

Young people and parents are made aware of the complaints procedures when they are introduced to the short break service. Parents confirmed this and said they know how to make a complaint and feel able to speak to staff about any concerns. Staff are aware that some young people are unable to communicate verbally. However, they state they know and would recognise a change in a young person and investigate what this could be. Formats for complaints are also in pictorial formats to support young people using them. Where complaints or concerns have been raised the home acts upon these and ensures that lessons, practices and approaches are changed to benefit young people and their future care.

Staff provide care in a way that effectively promotes young people's welfare regardless of the challenges they present. Diverse needs such as health, disability, vulnerability and personal safety are all effectively promoted. Young people are actively involved in the running of the home. For example, young people make suggestions about the weekly activities and trips with help from staff, changes in the home environment and resources. In recent months young people have been involved in consultation over a change in the menus. Tasting sessions have taken place to see whether young people like new foods. Fish on Friday's has been changed as they also had fish at school for lunch. Listening to young people's opinions and views is given importance to influence what goes on in the home. There are regular meetings for young people to share their views. These are on one set day of the week. Depending on when young people have a short-break at the home their views may be missed.

Good standards of care are also based upon detailed in-house care plans, including

risk assessments. These are very clear about a young person's individual needs and the support they require. Staff consider and respect young people's views and these are incorporated into how young people are cared for. Parents confirmed that they are consulted about the care of their children. A parent said 'I am invited to read and contribute to my child's care plan.' Staff are fully aware of the specific plans for each young person and ensure they are followed with precision. This provides young people with consistent support and care to make good progress in their agreed goals.

Staff also support young people effectively to learn new skills, develop their independence and where able to make choices in their lives. Staff are able to demonstrate the progress young people are making from the starting point of their placement. This is reflected by the young people's individual care plans, detailing the progress and positive outcomes they have achieved.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people's safety is a high priority. They benefit from short break stays in a physically safe environment where they are protected from harm. Staff are trained in safeguarding and health and safety. They are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, including issues in relation to young people's personal circumstances, and know exactly what they need to do to protect young people. No bullying is taking place in the home. Good staffing levels permits staff to closely supervise young people at all times. Young people are supported to show kindness and respect to others.

Young people are safe at the home. A parent said, 'Yes, I feel my child is kept safe,' and another said, 'I can raise any concern with the home and they listen and sort this out, my son would let me know if anything was wrong.' Risk assessments give clear information to staff on the action to take to minimise or eliminate an identified risk for each young person. Staff demonstrate a very good awareness of each young person's individual risks and explain how they implement these in practice. They ensure plans for young people's safety are consistently put into practice and address young people's needs. They are knowledgeable about young people's specific vulnerabilities. As a result, young people are kept safe, feel cared for and protected.

Staff know young people very well and are therefore sensitive to their individual gestures and methods of communication, body language, mood and physical presentation. This means that young people's concerns and changes in behaviour are clearly understood. Staff follow clear processes for recording incidents and concerns and take action to escalate any emerging welfare matters to the right agencies. Staff attend training in safeguarding and child protection and complete refresher courses to ensure their skills are kept up-to-date.

Young people benefit greatly from the homes' ethos of focussing on positive behaviour, with lots of praise and reassurance given to young people. Clear routines,

structure and boundaries give support, reduce anxieties, and assist young people to feel safe and secure. Staff have a good awareness of possible triggers for individual young people. They work well with other professionals where identified, to devise and implement positive behaviour strategies to support young people. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only occurs if a young person is endangering themselves or others. Negative behaviour is successfully re-directed and de-escalation techniques are used effectively to reduce the number of incidents. This supports young people to behave in a positive and socially acceptable way. Record keeping relating to this is good. Practice is regularly monitored and reviewed by the manager to ensure young people are safe and to help reduce the frequency future incidents.

Young people are protected by a range of other safeguarding measures. These include effective staff recruitment vetting before appointment. Young people are protected from any hazards by a range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and maintenance checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency. Visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

adequate

Young people benefit from an experienced manager who understands their needs and those of the service as a whole. This is reinforced by an experienced senior team which has been enhanced further by new members. The manager has over 17 years' experience in working with young people and five years working in management role. He has been managing this home for just over a year and is undertaking a new management qualification to achieve the required level.

The Statement of Purpose includes the required information to assist professionals and others making decisions for young people requiring a short break service. This, along with the children's guide, answers the relevant questions that young people and parents may have before accessing a service at the home. However, recently the Statement of Purpose has not been adhered to. There has been a breach of the regulations with the emergency bed being used for longer than a 12 week period as specified. The manager kept Ofsted informed of this prior to the inspection and liaised with the placing authority to address this matter with some urgency. He is working with the local authority to identify a more appropriate long term placement. While this home is primarily a short-break service, this extended stay has not impacted on the care of young people using the service.

Young people benefit from care delivered by a suitably managed, stable and permanent staff team. There is a core of staff who have worked in the home for some considerable time. This is supplemented with regular trained agency workers when required while any vacancies are filled. Using regular staff promotes the

consistency of care to young people who have learning disabilities, autism and complex needs. Staff state this has enhanced the standard of care delivered.

Staff say they feel well supported. The manager and management team are approachable, listen and work with the team to improve the service provided to young people. This has brought improved team morale. Staffing levels are good and are increased to meet the needs of young people. Staff are motivated and have common goals. This ensures: young people enjoy their stay; that effective support is given to families; and that young people's needs are well met. This assists and supports improved outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from being cared for by staff that are well trained overall. The majority of the staff team have completed the NVQ, level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. New staff are enrolled to take this qualification. There is an on-going programme of regular refresher training provided including child protection, first aid, behaviour management, food hygiene, health and safety. Some specialist training is undertaken in such areas as tube feeding, autism and epilepsy. However, two new staff are not yet trained in behaviour management to enable them to support young people presenting difficult behaviour. Currently this does not impact significantly on the safety of young people. The vast majority of staff have undertaken this training and sufficiently trained staff are working on every shift.

Staff state there is good support from the management team. There are regular staff meetings and handovers, which aid good communication. However, not all staff, including some agency workers, receive regular formal supervision in line with the home's policies and procedures. This does not consistently allow all staff to access continuing advice and guidance in relation to their care of young people or support continued staff development.

The overall number, competence and deployment of staff, fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose to provide suitable staff able to meet the individual needs of the children accessing this service.

Improvements have been made to the management monitoring systems but these are not yet robust enough in all areas. There is a clear development plan which identifies areas for development and improvement. The one requirement and two recommendations made at the last inspection have been implemented which include improvement in the monitoring by the Registered Provider. The independent visitor commissioned by the Registered Provider now consults more with parents, other professionals and persons working at the home. This is in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. Where omissions and deficiencies are identified in the monitoring undertaken, the Registered Manager takes immediate action to make improvement to the quality of care.

The Registered Manager's and Registered Provider's monitoring of the home is routinely undertaken. However, while subsequent monitoring reports cover the

majority of essential and required areas, they are not yet fully evaluating the quality of care provided to young people. The systems do not specifically report on the how the children are effectively safeguarded. This omission has not impacted on young people as there are currently no safeguarding concerns.

Some reports have failed to be sent to Ofsted as required. Additionally the manager's monitoring has failed to identify shortfalls in the provision of regular supervision for all staff. Therefore, this does not demonstrate fully how effective the home is operating or how the quality of care provided is to improve further for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.