

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC406505
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Leeds City Council
Registered person address	Leeds City Council, Department of Education 110 Merrion Centre LEEDS LS2 8DT
Responsible individual	Stephen Banks Walker
Registered manager	Claire Wright
Date of last inspection	03/02/2014

Inspection date	13/11/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
-------------------	--------------------

Young people with complex needs benefit greatly from the high quality, individualised care they receive from the team of committed and competent staff when they stay in the service. They enjoy carefully planned short breaks where they are able to choose activities they enjoy. Their health needs are understood by staff and are fully met during their stays. Their education is supported so they continue to make progress towards their individual targets. Families are very positive about the service. They report that their children have very good relationships with staff, that they 'look forward to going' and 'really enjoy' their short breaks stays. Young people themselves get on well with the staff who look after them and are very happy when they stay in the home.

Staff have a detailed knowledge of the individual needs of the young people they care for. They are committed to ensuring that young people benefit as much as they can from their stays. They have an excellent understanding of how individual young people communicate their wishes and feelings and they ensure that there is regular meaningful consultation with young people. This ensures that their views influence their stays in the home. Excellent safe care practices support the safety and dignity of young people at all times.

The manager, together with the deputy and senior care staff, provide effective leadership to the staff team. They demonstrate a strong commitment to driving forward improvements in the home. Robust internal and external arrangements for monitoring practice ensure that there is excellent oversight of the care that is given to young people.

No requirements or recommendations have been made at this inspection.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by the local authority. It is registered to provide accommodation and care for up to 12 children who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities and sensory impairment. Children usually stay at the home for short-breaks spread across the year for up to a maximum total of 35 days per year.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2014	Interim	good progress
30/05/2013	Full	good
29/11/2012	Interim	good progress
28/06/2012	Full	adequate

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people greatly enjoy their stays in the home. They are able to participate in a wide range of stimulating and constructive activities. One young person said 'The best thing about the home is going on trips with my mates'. Activities are well planned to meet the specific needs and abilities of young people so that they can get the most from them. Recent trips have included visits to local farms and wildlife sanctuaries, trips on steam trains, visits to local museums and a falconry centre. Young people also enjoy activities in the home such as baking, arts and crafts, playing electronic games and relaxing in the sensory room or lounges.

Parents maintain responsibility for the health needs of their children, but these are met exceptionally well when young people stay in the home. Comprehensive information about young people's health is obtained before they start their short breaks. This is kept up to date and accurate, so that young people's ongoing and emerging needs can be monitored very closely during their stays. Staff are given specific training to make sure that they have the necessary skills to care for young people, a number of whom have complex health needs. For example they are trained in the management of epilepsy and in gastrostomy tube feeding. Staff have developed very strong links with a number of different health agencies and they work very closely with parents. This ensures a consistent approach to young people's health care that promotes their well-being very effectively. Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle when they stay in the home. They are given nutritious meals; they are supported to exercise and their physical and emotional well being is enhanced by their involvement in activities.

Parents retain overall responsibility for young people's education. However, staff work very effectively with parents and teachers to ensure that young people's education continues to be promoted during their stays. Staff ensure that young people attend school and they make sure that information about young people is exchanged through their home-school diaries. They attend and contribute to all meetings that are held about young people where their education is discussed. The home is well resourced to support young people's learning and general development through play and activities. For example, young people have access to computers, books, games, arts and crafts materials and outdoor play equipment.

Young people are fully supported to make choices about what they want to do during their stays. They are helped to share their views about the home through house meetings, key worker sessions and surveys. These arrangements take account of the many different ways in which young people make their views known, so that consultation is meaningful. Young people's choices and opinions are taken seriously and acted on.

During their stays, young people are able to develop their personal and life skills. This is done at a pace that is entirely appropriate to their individual and complex needs and abilities. For example, all young people are supported to make choices about their routines in the home and some young people are able to learn how to do practical tasks such as helping to cook meals. Parents report that this is something that the home does really well. One parent said 'They are brilliant at promoting independence skills and happy to continue with anything home are doing'.

As this service offers short breaks, family contact is not generally an issue. However, staff maintain detailed information about contact issues. Parents are encouraged to visit the home and to keep in touch with the service by phone when they want to. In the event that a young person wishes to get in touch with their family during their stay, this is facilitated by staff. Parents comment that staff are very good at keeping them informed and say that they feel welcome when they visit the home.

Quality of care

outstanding

Young people benefit greatly from being cared for by a team of staff who are committed and enthusiastic about their work and the young people they look after. Staff value young people as individuals and speak very positively about them. The warm and nurturing environment that they create in the home, helps young people to settle and to enjoy their breaks.

Staff are very well informed about young people's diverse needs because they ensure that detailed information is made available to them when a service is requested. Placements are very carefully planned to ensure that young people and their families are fully supported at all times. Peer matching is excellent, ensuring that young people are appropriately placed with other young people with similar abilities and needs. This greatly enhances young people's positive experiences in the home.

Care staff develop detailed and clear placement support plans for young people. These identify specific targets that are important to young people, their families and social workers. The very high level of individualised care and support they receive from staff enables young people to make steady progress over time to meet their targets. Key workers take a lead responsibility for communication with families and professionals and for making sure that plans are progressed. The care team work very well together to ensure consistency of care.

Consultation with young people and their families is a real strength of the service. Young people's views about their care are actively sought and they are represented very well. Staff spend considerable time with young people identifying their wishes and feelings using their preferred methods of communication. They promote choice as a matter of course in their practice and work hard to put in place changes that young people have requested. The knowledge that staff have about young people enables them to identify when young people are not happy. They are keen to

advocate for young people when necessary and they act on any concerns they identify. Parents and professionals report that staff work very effectively with them to ensure that there is continuity of care.

Young people's good health is promoted very effectively by the home's arrangements for managing medication. Care staff are all trained in the safe storage and delivery of medicines. Records are clear and regularly reviewed. Medicines are brought into the home when young people arrive for their stay. They are taken away when the young person goes home. This means that there are no stocks of prescribed medication kept in the home. All medicines are stored securely in locked facilities. The procedures for administering medication are extremely robust and protect young people whilst ensuring that they have medicines when they need them. All staff are trained in first aid procedures, so that they know how to look after young people safely in an emergency.

Young people benefit from staying in a home that is very well maintained, both internally and externally. The home is spacious. It is brightly decorated and there are numerous photos of young people enjoying activities throughout the home. It is suitably furnished and appropriately equipped to meet the specific and complex needs of the young people who use the service. For example, there are hoists, specialist beds and baths and suitable play equipment. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with their own possessions when they stay. For example, some young people bring favourite toys. This helps them to settle and feel secure in the home.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Young benefit from staying in a service where safeguarding is regarded as central to their well being. Information gained from young people confirms that they feel safe in the home. Relatives and professionals report that the safety of young people is a very high priority for staff. One parent said 'We feel safe leaving (name) there due to the staff ratio, the building and the general atmosphere'.

Staff have an excellent awareness of safeguarding, particularly in relation to issues that may affect young people with disabilities. Staff training is kept up to date. Consequently, they maintain their understanding of child protection issues and know how to manage and report concerns to keep young people safe. Young people's privacy and dignity is respected throughout their stay, for example when staff deliver personal care.

Detailed risk assessments fully address young people's complex needs. Staff have an excellent knowledge of young people's vulnerabilities and they work together very effectively to implement their care plans and risk assessments. Consequently young people are cared for very safely.

Training in behaviour management equips staff to understand how to support young people to behave in socially acceptable and safe ways. Staff implement the strategies effectively in practice. Physical intervention is only ever used when it is necessary to keep young people and staff safe. There have been very few incidents since the last inspection. This contributes to young people's sense of safety and well-being.

Bullying is not an issue in the home. Staff make sure that short breaks are very carefully planned in order to avoid young people being placed together if they are not compatible and they are vigilant in their supervision of young people. Good levels of supervision ensure that young people do not leave the home without the knowledge of staff. Consequently, there have been no incidents of young people going missing. However, each young person has a risk assessment that addresses this concern and the home has a very clear procedure for managing unauthorised absences.

Health and safety matters are managed very well to ensure that the home remains a safe place for young people to stay. Risk assessments are kept up to date and equipment and installations are checked and serviced regularly. Staff are trained in fire evacuation procedures and they have an excellent understanding of how to support individual young people out of the building in an emergency.

Robust recruitment practices and checks on visitors ensure that young people are protected from unsuitable individuals who may pose a risk to them.

Leadership and management

outstanding

Young people stay in a home that is managed very effectively. The manager is registered with Ofsted and is suitably qualified in care and management. She is very experienced in working with young people in residential care and she has managed this home for 2 years. With the support of the staff team, she has made a number of improvements in that time, for example, recruiting new staff to work in the home, developing policies and improving aspects of the records. A qualified and experienced deputy and a small team of senior care staff ensure that the home continues to work effectively in the manager's absence. Together managers and senior staff provide excellent leadership to care staff.

There are robust systems in place to ensure that the work of the home is monitored. The manager undertakes regular checks on care. She provides a detailed report of her findings to senior managers in the local authority and to Ofsted. These evaluate the quality of care given to young people and give an overview of their progress in their time in the home. Reports confirm that there is very regular consultation with young people, relatives and professionals, enabling them to influence how the home is run. The manager has produced a very detailed development plan with clear and achievable targets for further improvement. An independent person visits the home every month to review the work of the staff and the care of young people and also completes a report, a copy of which is sent to Ofsted. These monitoring

arrangements ensure that there is excellent oversight of the well-being of young people. The manager makes sure that prompt action is taken to remedy any shortfalls that are identified as a result of these checks.

The manager is very keen to ensure that she maintains her own knowledge and skills through training and research on developments in social care. She is equally keen to ensure that staff have the training they need to keep their own skills up to date. Staff are competent. They are either qualified or working to gain the required qualification in care at Diploma level 3. They are enthusiastic about the training they receive. They confirm that training in such things as behaviour management, safeguarding, first aid and administration of medicines is regularly refreshed. They also have training in areas such as personal care and dignity, 'safe and comfortable eating and drinking' and autism. This supports them in their work with young people with complex needs. Where training is not immediately available through the local authority resources, the manager takes the initiative to source training from other professionals. For example, from nursing staff and occupational therapists to ensure that it is made available to staff.

Staff report that they feel they are well supported by their managers and senior care officers. They have regular good quality supervision, where they discuss the needs of young people as well as their own training and development needs. They feel that they communicate very effectively across the team in order to promote consistency in their care of young people. They demonstrate a very strong commitment to the young people they look after and are keen to help them to 'get as much as they can out of their stays'. Staff report that morale in the team is very good. One member of staff said 'I am very proud to be a member of such a passionate and successful team.'

One requirement and one recommendation were made at the previous inspection. These related to the content of the independent visitor's report and the requirement to send copies of these reports to Ofsted. Both are met. The local authority has ensured that a copy of all reports made under Regulation 33 is sent to Ofsted within the required timescales. Reports meet the requirement of the regulation. They review care in the home and reflect the consultation that has taken place with young people, their relatives, care staff and professionals. A new independent visitor has recently been appointed to undertake visits to the home. She is further developing the format of the report.

The Statement of Purpose is detailed and accurately records how the home works. Relatives have access to this document. They also have a copy of the home's Families' Handbook which gives them good information about the home. This was produced with the involvement of families themselves and therefore reflects the issues that they feel are important to parents. The young person's guide is produced in a colourful format using symbols and simple language. Staff give families a copy of this guide at an early stage in preparation for their child's stays. This helps young people to see who will look after them and what resources are available to them in

the home.

Information that is held about young people is well-managed and is kept up to date. It is stored securely to protect young people's right to confidentiality. Documents are explained to young people and they are helped to understand their records and add to them. This supports their understanding of the plans that are in place for their time in the home.

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.