

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036804
Inspector	Vicky Johnson
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Gateshead Council
Registered person address	Civic Centre Regent Street GATESHEAD Tyne and Wear NE8 1HH
Responsible individual	Frances Powell
Registered manager	Susan Ann Poad
Date of last inspection	10/06/2014

Inspection date	11/12/2014
Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **improved effectiveness**.

The home was judged as outstanding at its last inspection in June 2014. Since that inspection, the Registered Manager and staff team have made additional improvements to the standard and quality of care they provide to young people. No requirements or recommendations were set at the previous inspection and there are no new requirements or recommendations arising from this inspection.

The home provides an exceptionally high standard of care to the children and young people. Children look forward to their short breaks and are relaxed and happy in the staff's presence. For example, one young person confidently led the inspector on an unplanned tour of the home before leaving for school. Their calm and assured approach reflects security in their surroundings and trust in those around them. Staff prioritise and promote the children's peer relationships by arranging visits to coordinate with their friends. Such arrangements develop their social skills and significantly enhance the enjoyment of their stay.

Feedback from parents about the staff's relationships with the children and their contribution to their overall progress is excellent. One parent said, 'They're amazing, always have been' and, 'They're just brilliant, easy to talk to, always there on the phone'. Another parent expressed confidence in the staff's abilities: 'Somebody else can care for him as well as you can'. This parent also remarked, 'He's so much more independent; they encourage him to do things for himself and make his own choices', and, 'His social skills have come on leaps and bounds'. These comments reflect the extraordinary impact the home is making upon the children's individual development and upon the lives of their families.

Staff are acutely aware of the individual needs and personalities of the children. The Registered Manager and the staff team strive to meet their particular requirements,

no matter how small. Their careful and precise approach to planning the young people's stay and close consultation with parents and professionals is impressive. Staff take the lead in ensuring they have the relevant, up to date information to meet the children's needs to make their stay enjoyable, comfortable and rewarding. The Registered Manager promotes a comprehensively nurturing environment for the children which is reflected in the staff's enthusiasm for their work. They are flexible, committed and dedicated to their roles. They take delight in the children's individual successes and progress. One staff member said 'I absolutely love coming to work', and 'As long as the children are cared for safely and they're happy; job done'.

Children's needs are met through structured, individualised plans. Staff consult these plans daily and have a meticulous approach to the care they provide. Staff plan transitions for young people with consideration and care. When children are new to the home, staff monitor their mood and ability to settle through detailed daily recordings. To ensure a move is successful for a child, the Registered Manager and staff team are prepared to work extra shifts and additional hours. These preparations make sure the children's need for security and stability are given the highest priority.

Arrangements for the safe handling and administration of medication are robust. Consultation with health professionals is excellent. Staff ensure they are aware of all relevant information to safeguard and meet the children's complex health needs. One health professional commented that staff seek advice appropriately, keep them updated of the children's progress and are confident in managing their medication. Feedback about the quality of care the children receive is unreservedly positive. They said, 'Every time I visit, I'm really impressed' and, 'The kids seem really happy'.

Internal monitoring processes of the home are comprehensive and evaluative. Complaints are managed swiftly and risk assessments are updated following all significant incidents. Safeguarding practice is discussed regularly within the context of staff supervision and team meetings. This maintains staff awareness and ensures a well-coordinated and informed team response.

The Registered Manager is dedicated, well organised and forward thinking. Management arrangements deliver purposeful child-centred practice. The home's development plan is extensive, demonstrating a commitment to drive change and deliver further improvement. Attention to children's safeguarding needs is evident throughout this plan and in the processes of the home. The Registered Manager has made improvements to risk assessments to make them clearer and more accessible; updated the children's medication charts; and arranged for the staff team to refresh their medication training. Staff seek the children's views about their care in one to one sessions. The children participate in a young people's council chaired by an independent person and they were recently involved in the interviewing of staff. This demonstrates the commitment of the Registered Manager to ensure the young people feel valued and safe, and their voices influence the running of the home.

Since the last inspection, staff have completed a variety of training courses to enhance their ability to keep the young people safe. The majority of staff have completed training in child sexual exploitation and e-safety. This reflects the Registered Manager's recognition of the exceptional vulnerability of children with disabilities. They also ensure staff are trained to a level where they can share their training with other team members. Where possible, they source additional training courses from outside agencies. This enables them to use resources efficiently while investing strongly in the team's expertise and knowledge, thus further developing staff ability to meet the children's needs.

The Registered Manager and the staff team pay particular attention to the need for children and their parents to feel involved in the home. Regular coffee mornings for parents and the summer fayre sustain excellent communication and liaison with families and give the opportunity to share positive experiences. The Registered Manager plans to develop the home's statement of purpose to include individual profiles of the staff team. The Registered Manager also intends to develop this further to provide child friendly staff profiles within photograph albums to enable children to become familiar with the team prior to their stay. These proposals demonstrate the systematic child-centred commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of the service.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home provides short-break care for up to six young people with physical or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/06/2014	Full	outstanding
17/10/2013	Interim	good progress
16/07/2013	Full	outstanding
14/03/2013	Interim	good progress

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

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.