

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC042446
Inspector	Suzy Lemmy
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Jane Alexandra Corbett
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	19/03/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

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

The overall effectiveness of the home has improved since the last inspection in December. The Registered Manager is driving forward improvements. The home continues to offer children who stay for short breaks good outcomes and a good quality of care. This means that the children are able to develop skills and enjoy their stays. Positive interactions between staff and children were observed, staff manage challenging behaviour with a calm, patient and firm approach.

The Registered Manager has addressed the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. She has revised the Statement of Purpose, which is in an easy to read format. It was acknowledged that this does not yet include the home's policy in regards to emergency admission.

The management oversight of the recruitment process is robust; an action plan is in place to improve recruitment processes, track responsibilities, deadlines and completion dates. The Registered Manager and Registered Individual undertake regular audits and reviews of these processes. This ensures that staff have the necessary experience and children are cared for safely.

Staff are highly trained and confident in their role; there is an ethos of self-development. All staff have recently been trained to use Makaton. Children experience a consistent approach to communication by staff trained in the specific communication methods that children use. A staff member said that the induction and subsequent training was of a high standard and staff are tested on their understanding of the content of the training before they are able to work with the young people. They also have opportunities to gain further relevant qualifications.

The Registered Manager has devised a new form for completing internal monitoring in line with the new regulations. This includes consulting with children, parents and

placing authorities. However, this was not evident in the recent Regulation 34 report. Meaningful ways to consult with children in future reports are being explored.

The Registered Manager oversees supervision timescales, to ensure that all staff receive timely supervision. Staff feel supported by the management and report that they can ask for advice and guidance. Team meetings are effective; staff discuss performance issues and plans for development. This means that the children benefit from continuing improvements in their care.

Staff encourage children to reach measurable targets during their short break stays. Children continue to develop skills, linked to their educational goals. This gives the children a sense of achievement as well as ensuring that they can use skills in both home and school settings. The children work at their own pace and are able to achieve small steps and celebrate success. The Registered Manager is improving relationships with schools and commissioning authorities to ensure that the children's plans are in line with education, health and care plans. This means that the children will have a consistent approach to their identified outcomes. A parent said that the staff worked effectively with professionals when her child's behaviour became more challenging. Staff advocated on the child's behalf to ensure that she was cared for safely during the night. The child has been able to settle and work through her difficulties as a result, her mother said 'she is really excited when she knows she is going to stay'. Generally, liaison between the home and professionals is good; however, staff did not inform a social worker about a recent complaint or the outcome of the investigation. The Registered Manager recognises this shortfall and made changes to the complaints policy and records.

The home is in good decorative order; children have access to equipment that they need for their physical and social needs. They can use a soft play area and sensory room during their stay. Hoist tracking systems mean that they have access to all areas of the home. Children's rooms are individually decorated and personalised. This gives them a sense of ownership and belonging and increases their self-esteem.

Staff are well informed about the children's care plans, which clearly describe children's targets. Children benefit from a coordinated and consistent approach to their care. Staff work across both the children and adult services, which means that transitions to the adult short break service, is a natural process. Young people can quickly adapt to the change.

The Registered Manager is aware of the strengths of the services and the need for continual improvement to enable the children to receive a high level of care and positive experience during their short break stays.

Information about this children's home

The service offers short breaks for up to 12 children and young people with learning disabilities. It is run by a registered charity. The service is available to children and young people, of both sexes, aged between two years and 17 years. The building is dually registered with both Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to provide residential care.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
03/12/2013	Full	good
14/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
06/11/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the views of the child, the child's family, social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) are sought regularly on the child's care, specifically in respect of Regulation 34 reports (NMS 1.4)
- ensure that the children's home Statement of Purpose, includes the home's policy on emergency admissions (NMS 13)
- ensure the written complaints procedure is robust and followed in practice, especially in relation to informing the Local Authority about any complaints and ensuring this is in the home complaints procedures. (NMS 21.10)

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.