

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC020558
Inspection date	16/02/2011
Inspector	Chris Fuller
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	02/09/2010
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The school is registered as a children's home to accommodate 22 children and young people from eight years to under 18 years. At the time of the inspection, 19 children and young people were being accommodated. The school provides education and care to children and young people who present with severe learning disabilities, challenging behaviours, autistic spectrum disorder and associated epilepsy. The school is approved and registered by the Department for Education.

The interior of the downstairs of the house is split into four main communal areas and these comprise a large lounge, a kitchen and diner with adjoining bathroom and toilet facilities. The children and young people are grouped in terms of age and compatibility. The Lodge provides accommodation for young people from 16 years to under 18 years with the remit to provide opportunities to develop independent living skills.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The unannounced interim inspection visit was made to monitor the key national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe. Progress with addressing the recommendation in respect of the Statement of Purpose identified at the previous inspection was also monitored.

The inspection found that the home has continued to develop and improve the service and facilities provided for young people. The outcome area of staying safe was found to be outstanding on this occasion. The open and inclusive management style enables staff to be creative and innovative, providing the best possible care for young people. The staff team continues to give the highest priority to securing the health and safety of young people in a stimulating environment. Young people enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their individual skills and abilities and make good progress. There are no actions or recommendations in respect being set as a result of this visit.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made the previous inspection in respect of the Statement of Purpose. The manager took immediate action to amend the document during the period of the inspection so that it accurately reflects the age group of young people that the home is registered to accommodate.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are protected from abuse and their health, welfare and safety is promoted. Staff practice demonstrates that staff highly respect the privacy and dignity of young people and their views are sought and given full consideration. Parents state, 'I have continually been impressed with the care provided to all the children by individual members of staff'. Young people clearly benefit from the care of staff dedicated to enhancing their quality of life and daily experiences. Staff show a very high regard for the privacy of young people and maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. Young people say they enjoy living in the children's home, 'I like it here'.

Staff are vigilant in their supervision of young people so that any issues or concerns that the young people may have are addressed promptly. This service has been enhanced by the employment of a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. They work closely with the staff team to improve communication techniques and resources. This in turn improves the ability of young people to express their views, preferences and make choices. Equally, staff are exceptionally creative producing highly individualised resources and materials to work with young people such as, storybooks and a menu-planning photo library, so that young people are able to participate in making choices about daily routines and life in the home. There are very effective formal and informal communication systems, including contact with external independent people or agencies that ensure young people's views are taken seriously.

The home has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures for all safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, countering bullying, absence of a child without authority and notification of significant events. The home has a large group of very experienced, highly skilled and qualified staff, with 85% of the staff group achieving NVQ Level 3. High priority is given to staff training in a range of child protection and safeguarding topics. In addition, there are designated staff who lead on safe caring practice within the home and monitor and audit safeguarding processes. Management and staff network well with other agencies and share information appropriately. Staff are vigilant in monitoring the health and welfare of young people and seek specialist advice to address any issues they identify. Staff recognise the impact of internal and external stimuli on young people's well-being and work extremely well together to provide holistic care to young people so that they are protected from any harm.

High levels of staffing and supervision of young people prevents bullying becoming

an issue. Staff have sufficient knowledge of each young person and their trigger points to pre-empt any aggressive or offensive behaviour. Bullying rarely happens within the home and staff act immediately on any information that bullying or harmful behaviour might be taking place; whether this is in the home or outside the home. Staff regularly review the dynamics of relationships amongst young people on each unit so that they proactively take action to address any concerns.

There are detailed individual risk assessments and plans for what to do should each young person go missing. The plans comprehensively describe what action is taken, including who is to be notified and the timescales by which each person or agency should be notified. The risk assessment and plan are reviewed if young person goes missing. There are clear processes for records to be made every time a young person goes missing. The home maintains excellent safeguarding of young people with no incidents of young people going missing or absence without authority during the past inspection year.

The management and staff implement a strong ethos of positive parenting that places the health and welfare of the young person as paramount. There are sound systems and frameworks which provide guidance for staff of managing challenging behaviour. These are constantly under review and recently improved with the provision of dedicated bound books to record physical interventions. Management efficiently audit or recording to ensure safe caring practice measures are implemented. Management and staff are extremely enthusiastic and dedicated to improving standards of care through reflective practice. Staff actively encourage acceptable behaviour and see young people in an extremely positive light. They take great joy in the progress made by young people. The staff develop extremely detailed individual behaviour management strategies and regularly review these to ensure they remain purposeful and meaningful. Staff creatively produce individual storybooks and photo/picture libraries as resources to enhance young people's understanding of their feelings and emotions and their likes and dislikes. This in turn enables them to express their feelings in a safe constructive manner.

Management conscientiously ensure a safe and stimulating environment for young people that promotes their health and well-being. Parents express full confidence in the management and staff to provide young people with every opportunity to extend and enhance their skills and abilities. This is done in a safe, well-considered manner based on sound risk assessments of each young person's individual needs. A parent states, 'The service takes a holistic approach to each child's pastoral and educational needs. My child has flourished physically during their time at the home, where progress has been slow it is due to the limitations imposed on my child by their condition and not due to lack of input, resources or care.' Staff receive training and demonstrate an understanding of all health and safety topics; this means they are competent and able to address any safe caring needs of the young people. Management regularly monitor and audit practice within the home. Young people are consistently shown the importance of keeping themselves safe through daily routines and practices that promote health and safety strategies.

The home has a well-established and effective system for the vetting and supervision

of visitors. The management has robust systems for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.