

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC003897
Inspection date	26/07/2011
Inspector	Chris Passmore
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	17/02/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is operated by a independent organisation. Children and young people using this service have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The service is registered to provide residential care and accommodation for one child or young person of either gender aged between seven and 17 at any time. Staffing is appropriate to the individual needs of young people in placement.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

This home has not had young people in placement consistently over the past year. It has only recently become an active service again therefore it is difficult to fully evaluate the outcomes for young people. Based on the evidence so far the potential for positive outcomes is good. The home is well managed and the quality of care provided since placements began is outstanding. There are some areas of clarification needed in relation to the legal status of placements and the provision of placement plans. These responsibilities lie with the placing authorities and the service is chasing for their resolution. Young people are kept safe in the setting.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure full placement plans are provided by the placing authority to assist young people understand the reasoning behind decisions about their care. (NMS 25.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

By far the most notable achievement for young people living at the home has been their improved attendance at education and the improved behaviour record while there. As a direct result of these achievements the educational opportunities for the next academic year are much improved. Behaviour patterns overall are improved from the point at which the placements began. These improvements also enable young people to enjoy a wide range of normal activities, such as communal

swimming. Young people are able to maintain good contact with significant family members while in placement therefore able to maintain their sense of identity and relationship. Overall the potential for positive outcomes is good given the progress in a relatively short space of time.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

There is a small but consistent staff team who are getting to know the needs of the young people living in the home. Staff provide consistent boundaries for young people to operate safely within and to function socially. One social worker who commented spoke very highly of the quality of care given and the professionalism of the staff team. They attributed the improvements in their young person's behaviour to these factors.

Sanctions and physical interventions have not been required. Behaviour standards and involvement in the running of the home are explained and young people make positive progress in these areas. For example responsible behaviour when preparing hot food or safety awareness when crossing roads have been discussed. Records show that young people listen to these messages and respond appropriately. Safe food preparation and meal times are positive shared experiences. Through staff awareness and gentle training young people now take the initiative for road safety and using safety equipment without prompting when in a vehicle.

Staff support and encouragement to engage with education has led to an outstanding improvement in educational attendance and achievement. For example young people who were excluded from education have re-engaged with education with staff support. This has been so successful that the school has agreed to a return to five day attendance next term.

Staff offer individualised care based on assessed need. Staff are quick to recognise and encourage individual skills and abilities and they encourage young people to take control of their own lives. They listen to the views, opinions and wishes of young people and respond to them. Where age appropriate and an expressed choice, staff give physical contact in the form of hugs at the beginning and end of the day. Young people have the opportunity to discuss lifestyle issues with staff at any time or can use the professional services available to them.

There are areas of care planning that need clarification by the placing authorities. These relate to specific care needs and permanence planning for individual young people. Placement reviews are planned and these issues can thereby be monitored by the service provider.

There are robust arrangements in place to keep young people safe both within and outside of the service. Staff are pro-active in protecting young people from unnecessary upsets through contacts. They support family contact sessions in a way that exceeds the required standards and the expectations of the placing authorities.

The staff group is adjusted in terms of gender mix and safeguarding to provide opportunities for normal mixed gender activities to take place.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Flexible staffing ratios are in place to protect young people in the home and community. Young people state that they feel safe in the home and know staff do their best to safeguard them. The incidence of anyone going missing from the home is rare but there are appropriate systems in place to safeguard young people as far as possible in that event. Positive behaviour is encouraged and well managed by well trained and committed staff. Physical interventions and sanctions have not been used. There are good links with other professionals responsible for safeguarding children and young people. Their involvement is appropriate to the level of need at any point in time. Health and safety within the home is well managed and all essential safety checks are in date. Young people know what to do in the event of an emergency such as a fire and are kept safe when using the home's mains services such as electric ovens.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The Statement of Purpose for the home is clear and the organisation meets the stated aims and objectives. Staff are successful in providing a stable and structured environment for young people. Care practices are aimed at providing a stable setting in which young people develop self awareness and opportunities to develop in a safe, supportive environment. Young people have appropriate staffing according to their individual needs and level of development.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff understand young people's individual strengths and needs. There are consistent working practices which focus on enhancing young people's individual quality of life and potential. Staff are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and support and develop young people's understanding in this regard.

Young people receive good positive care from a small but well supported staff team. Staff confirmed they have good training opportunities and regular supervision sessions. There are frequent opportunities where informal discussion takes place with managers on care related issues. There is a free flow of information and ideas between staff and managers. By this staff build up a picture of the young people, understand their individual needs and form good relationships between them.

The relationship between staff, managers and young people is warm, friendly and respectful. Manager's have the welfare of young people and staff at heart. Staff state they have regular supervision and support from the Registered Manager and good training opportunities to keep them up to date. Staff are committed to providing

positive outcome opportunities for young people such as continuing their education.

There are robust systems of monitoring already in place. The Statement of Purpose is regularly reviewed. There are monitoring visits made by the Organisation and the manager makes monthly internal monitoring reviews. This monitoring ensures care practices are scrutinised and developed for the benefit of young people. The development plan for the service is realistic and practical. The recommendation made at the previous inspection has been acted on and records enhanced.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.