

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Mark Ryder
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Date of last inspection	15/03/2010
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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 home, which is also a school, provides care and education for up to 10 young people aged between 11 and 16 years who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home comprises a large detached property set in its own grounds that provide for a range of activities. Young people are able to access local leisure activities in the immediate neighbourhood. The home has transport to take the young people to those facilities that are a travelling distance away.

There were nine young people in placement and all contributed to some degree with this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an announced inspection aligned with an educational inspection that was completed at the same time. All key standards were assessed. The service has good outcomes under all areas. Young people's health needs are managed well with a wide range and variety of meals provided. Young people are consulted on all aspects of their care. Safety measures in place ensure young people are protected. Staff are competent, well trained and motivated to work with young people with complex needs. Education is strongly promoted and young people clearly benefit from the 24-hour curriculum. Behaviour management strategies help young people to develop the skills to manage in social situations. Records are regularly monitored. Young people are aware of the complaints procedure although records do not always reflect whether such complaints are completed within acceptable timescales. However, the monitoring of records and practice within this setting is consistent and influences positive change to the development of the service.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health needs of young people are assessed and regularly monitored. Staff encourage young people to attend health appointments and they are supported by a specialist nurse who visits the young people at the school. Young people are able to discuss a wide range of health related issues with the nurse covering such topics as sexual behaviour, smoking cessation and drug awareness. Medication administration is safe and managed well. Young people are fully involved in the planning of menus and enjoy a variety of home cooked and well-prepared nutritious meals. Fresh fruit and vegetables are a staple diet for young people. Culturally and medically appropriate diets are available and managed well. Young people say they enjoy the food and feel they have a choice over what they eat.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Privacy of young people is respected. Staff are aware of the need for young people to have their own personal space. Complaints are managed well and young people are fully informed of the progress of any concerns they have. Records reflect the nature of the complaint, the actions taken and the outcome. However, records do not include the time in which complaints are finalised. This means it is unclear how long a complaint has taken to be addressed.

Young people are protected in line with robust safeguarding procedures. Staff are competent in managing safeguarding incidents and procedures are available to all staff who receive regular training. The home has a good track record of effectively responded to incidents.

Incidents of bullying within this setting are low. Young people are able to discuss any concerns with staff and to raise such issues during weekly resident meetings. Risk assessments are carried out to help staff manage and minimise the potential for bullying. Information around the school and residential areas include what young people can do if they are feeling bullied. A young person said 'although bullying sometimes does happen here I feel I can talk to staff about it and something gets done'.

There is a well informed process, based on clear policy and procedures in responding to and reporting young people who are missing without authority. Records provide a detailed account of the incident including what action staff take in addressing the reasons for any absence without authority.

Relationships between staff and young people are friendly and good natured. Young people respond to reasonable boundaries to ensure they are kept safe or to help

them maintain socially acceptable behaviour. Behaviour management records are in good order and regularly monitored. All staff receive regular training on the safe use of physical intervention. However, such incidents are infrequent thus evidencing the competence of staff in diffusing young people's behaviour. Staff record the consequences of negative behaviour as well as highlighting and rewarding positive behaviour. This balanced and well informed approach to childcare helps young people to develop and understand socially acceptable behaviour. A young person said 'although I don't like getting told off, sanctions are fair'.

Health and safety of staff, visitors and young people are managed through a consistent approach. Fire safety measures are regularly checked and both staff and young people are fully aware of the procedures to evacuate the house in the event of a fire. All visitors are also informed of this procedure.

The recruitment and selection of staff is managed in accordance with statutory legislation and guidance. Visitors are suitably checked before they enter the building. This ensures that all who work or visit young people are suitable.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Therapeutic support is an integral part of each young person's placement at this setting. Young people benefit from both psychodynamic art therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy that is available in-house. A young person was positive about their initial experiences with this approach and felt that it helped them understand their behaviour and feelings. External therapeutic provision is also available to some young people from child and adolescent mental health services. Young people, therefore, are given every opportunity to talk about their lives in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Staff encourage young people to engage in education in a positive and structured way using a variety of incentives. Young people attend the organisation's own on-site school which further promotes the educational ethos of this service. There are clear plans in place, which are regularly reviewed, to determine suitable and realistic educational targets. The close working relationships between residential and educational staff strengthen the 24-hour curriculum that is central to each young person's placement. Young people who have a history of inconsistent schooling significantly improve educational attainment from being in placement at this service.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans provide young people and staff with a clear insight into how they are developing within their placement. Plans are updated monthly and are strongly

influenced by the young people. Cultural, religious and ethnicity issues are referred to and considered within the plans. Young people attend their review meetings to discuss current and future plans and are fully engaged in the process. A young person said, 'I get to talk about how I am doing at my review'.

Contact arrangements are well documented and clearly recorded within each young person's file. Young people are assisted to maintain positive contact with parents, if appropriate to do so. Young people feel that they are able to make informed choices about the level of contact they wish to have. A private and secure residents' telephone is also available for young people to speak to family members, friends and their social worker.

The culture of this setting strongly promotes consultation with young people through both formal and informal processes. Young people are able to discuss a range of issues during the weekly resident meetings and feel that staff support them in responding to their wishes and feelings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged and enabled to develop the skills in life to live independently. Staff promote an atmosphere in which young people respond positively to daily tasks such as helping in the kitchen and cleaning the home. There is an incentive for young people to do this which is very effective. The organisation has a programme which young people can undertake to help them develop the skills necessary for independent living. Reviews of the arrangements for the care of young people also address pathway planning with young people. A young person said that the staff, 'want us to learn how to do things ourselves which is a good thing'.

The accommodation provides young people with a well designed and pleasant environment in which to live. The interior of the living area is in a good condition and reflects the diverse backgrounds of the young people. Young people can personalise their rooms with their own photographs and posters as well as requesting the colour of at least two of the walls. Young people like their rooms and enjoy spending time relaxing at the end of a day.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The welfare, safety and positive development of young people at this school are well established and provide good outcomes for young people.

The staff provide young people with a guide about the home as well as a more general guide regarding the organisation. This is written in a style easily understood

by young people. A young person said they were given this guide by staff who went through it before they arrived at the school and it was helpful. The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the ethos and function of this service.

Staff are competent, well motivated and suitably trained in working with young people with complex needs. Supervision and team meetings are a regular feature of this service; staff are positive about how they are supported in their role. All staff have the opportunity to discuss their professional development through an annual appraisal meeting. This ensures that the skills and knowledge of working with young people continues to be at the forefront of practice. Training is on-going and staff benefit from a wide range of suitably planned courses. For example, the introduction of working psychotherapeutically, with the guidance and support of the art therapist, has contributed to reviewing how to engage with young people in distress. The low level of the use of restraints is considered a direct result of such an approach.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people benefit from a competent staff team that understands their needs well. The composition of the staff team reflects the gender and ethnic diversity of the group of residents. Staff are aware of issues that may discriminate against young people who live in residential care and support and advise young people to live as full lives as possible.

Young people's case files are regularly reviewed and changed in light of further developments. Young people are actively involved in all parts of their placement and assessment. Young people are aware that they may access their own records.

Monitoring of the home's records and practice is undertaken regularly. Reports identify trends or patterns of practice which are reviewed. A development plan is in place which reflects the direction in which the service wishes to progress, for example, the re-decoration of the residential areas including the young people's bedrooms.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure the written record of a complaints includes the date when finalised.
(NMS16.3)