

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005042
Inspection date	10/10/2013
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	11/03/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The privately owned service is both a children's home and a school that provides care and education for up to 12 young people who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Ten young people can be accommodated at the children's home with a further two young people accommodated in the satellite home.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

The home offers a good level of care to young people. Care planning is highly personalised and ensures that the needs of young people are met at all times. Young people make good progress at the home in all areas of their lives. They feel valued, respected and listened to.

Young people enjoy living at the home. They enjoy a good range of activities and lead active lifestyles. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and built on mutual respect. A young person commented that the 'staff are kind.'

Young people are safe and feel safe. The Registered Manager ensures that a safe environment is maintained at all times. Young people are protected from harm and all staff are clear in their safeguarding responsibilities. Excellent relationships with the local police underpin a service that is committed to keeping young people safe from harm.

The home is well managed and has clear plans for further development. Improvements since the last inspection include extensive redecoration, a new satellite provision and improved links with the organisation's therapist. The staff team are well supported in their duties and are committed to providing effective care to young people at all times.

As a result of this inspection, two recommendations have been made. These relate to

sanctions records and ensuring that restraint training is refreshed in accordance with the home's policy. There is no demonstrable negative impact to young people as a result of these two areas to improve.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where children's homes use restraint, staff are trained in the use of physical restraint techniques and only use the home's agreed techniques. Training is regularly refreshed (NMS 3.15)
- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

The educational achievement of young people is excellent. All young people attend the on-site school and make significant progress with their academic achievements. Success is celebrated and young people are encouraged to recognise and reflect on their progress. For example, regular key work sessions focus on progression and young people value being listened to. As a result, they develop their confidence and self-esteem. A social worker commented that a 'young person has a trusting and positive relationship with their key worker.' A young person commented that 'I am happy here. I have changed loads since I first came here. I am a different person now.'

All young people feel listened to, valued and respected. Regular young people meetings ensure that the views, opinions and wishes of young people are explored and acted upon. As a result, young people know that their voices are heard in the home. Regular house meetings, and wider involvement with the school council, ensure that young people feel empowered to influence changes in the home.

Young people make significant progress with managing their emotions and displaying socially acceptable behaviours. Young people do not place themselves at risk of harm or engage in risk-taking behaviours. In some cases, there has been substantial improvement in relation to young people's starting points. Young people develop safe behaviours at the home. Comments from social workers and independent reviewing officers include; 'the young person has improved his behaviour', 'offending behaviour has dramatically reduced' and 'the staff team have turned the young person around. Episodes of missing and other risky behaviours have dramatically reduced.'

Young people make good progress in developing their emotional resilience. They are encouraged to form meaningful attachments with staff and young people at the home. This underpins an environment where young people feel part of the home and are settled, happy and relaxed. Comments from social workers include; 'the young person is clearly settled there', 'the young person has a trusting and positive relationship with their keyworker' and 'they are really happy there.'

Young people are encouraged to develop their independence and readiness for adulthood. A social worker commented that 'the home are supporting independence work and the young person is making good progress.' All young people take turns to complete a range of domestic tasks around the home. This results in an environment where young people play an active part in day to day communal living.

Quality of care

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

The organisation's therapist works closely with the staff team. This has led to improvements in the support given to young people. For example, enhanced key working sessions ensure that specific work is undertaken around young people's emotional needs. As a result, the staff team are able to provide highly personalised care to young people. Care plans are well-written, regularly reviewed and include the views and preferences of young people. The staff team ensure that individual needs relating to culture are identified and met in care planning. For example, advice is sought from religious leaders about the provision of prayer routines and dietary considerations. This ensures that young people are enabled to follow their faiths and traditions.

Effective medication procedures ensure that young people's prescriptions are diligently followed. All staff are trained in the safe administering of medication and regular stock checks ensure that any discrepancies are quickly identified. As a result, the health needs of young people are promoted in the home. All young people have up-to-date health plans and these are regularly reviewed. Attendance at statutory health appointments is maintained. Young people are encouraged to maintain their health and any concerns are appropriately shared and resolved.

A culture of mutual respect is evident in the home and relationships between staff and young people are highly positive. An independent reviewing officer commented that there are 'excellent relationships between staff and young people.' Young people enjoy spending time with each other in and outside of the home. Tensions between young people are rare and where they do occur, are quickly resolved. Young people learn to live harmoniously and develop appropriate attachments with each other. This leads to a home that is settled and free from bullying. A member of staff commented that 'we nurture the young people.'

All young people attend the on-site school and are encouraged to make good progress. Excellent relationships between education and care staff ensure that any concerns are quickly identified and resolved. A therapist commented that 'young

people's care needs are discussed regularly in focused meetings.' As a result, consistency is maintained between home and education at all times.

Complaints from young people are rare. Where they do occur, they are swiftly and sensitively handled. Young people are encouraged to speak up if they are unhappy and are provided with the means to do so. The young person's guide contains all required details of support services and young people have access to the freely available telephone. As a result, young people can raise their concerns outside of the home. Regular key work sessions ensure that young people are able to discuss their care with the staff team. Regular house meetings discuss matters affecting the group. Choice is actively promoted and young people are able to influence meal choices, activities and décor around the home. This results in a home that listens to young people and acts on their wishes, views and feelings.

Food provided to children is balanced, varied and healthy. The majority of meals in the home are prepared by on-site professional catering staff. Meal times are a social occasion and enjoyed by young people. Where young people have specific dietary needs, these are appropriately catered for.

The home is, on the whole, well presented. The downstairs of the home is warm, welcoming and well resourced. However, the upstairs of the home is currently being redecorated. As a result, there are areas of the home that are unsightly. The Registered Manager has firm plans for completing this work and all appropriate actions are being completed. The staff are working closely with the persons completing the work to minimise the disruption to young people. Young people enjoy relaxing in the home's communal areas and have access to a wide range of activities. For example, young people enjoy playing video games, table tennis and playing outside in the extensive garden. Regular trips and outings ensure that young people play an active part in their local and wider community. A young person commented that the 'activities are awesome.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Restraint is used appropriately and only where absolutely necessary. There has been a marked reduction in the use of restraint since the last inspection. Excellent links with the organisation's therapist means that the staff team are employing new methods of supporting young people's behaviour. An independent reviewing officer commented that 'the staff have managed the young people's needs really well.'

The behaviour of young people is good. It is evident that young people enjoy living at the home and do not experience bullying as a problem. The staff provide effective role models for young people and ensure that models of good behaviour are promoted at all times. A social worker commented that 'the staff manage behaviour really well.' Appropriate rewards are used with young people to support them in developing positive behaviour in the home. Where young people display socially unacceptable behaviours, sanctions are appropriately used. Although sanctions are

fair and reasonable, the comments of young people are not always recorded where these measures are employed. As a result, the Registered Manager is unable to fully review the use of these measures and the impact on the young people. A recommendation has been made to improve this area of practice.

Staff recruitment procedures are robust. All adults wishing to work at the home are carefully vetted and all required checks are made prior to their employment starting. This ensures that young people are protected from having contact with adults who may wish to cause them harm. Visitors to the home are effectively checked and where necessary, chaperoned. This further adds to an environment that places the safety of young people at the centre of its operation.

The home has built highly effective relationships with the local police and officers regularly visit the home on an informal basis. A police officer commented that 'we are working really well with the home, it is helping to break down barriers between the police and the young people.' As a result, young people are able to form relationships with the police and this further enhances young people's sense of security at the home. Episodes of missing behaviour are rare, and where it does occur, are short lived and quickly resolved. The staff team are clear in their responsibilities and ensure that all appropriate actions are taken. Where concerns arise over the safety or welfare of young people, the Registered Manager ensures that swift referral is made to appropriate services of support. A police officer commented that they have 'no issues at all with the home.'

Risk assessment is thorough, regularly reviewed and implemented effectively. All young people have individualised behaviour plans and the staff are consistent in the implementation of these. As a result, young people receive consistent care that enables them to take appropriate risks as a part of growing up. Activities are safely managed and the Registered Manager ensures that appropriate staffing levels are in place at all times. Young people understand the rules and boundaries of the home and know what is expected of them. A young person commented that 'the rules are fair.'

All required checks on electrical and gas installations are in place and up to date. Regular checks of the home environment ensure that any defects are swiftly identified and acted upon. Regular fire drills ensure that young people and staff are practised in evacuating the home. These drills take place at different times of the day, including evening and night time hours. Regular checks and scheduled servicing of fire detection equipment ensures that this equipment is fit for purpose.

Leadership and management

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

The home was last inspected in March 2013 and was judged to be making good progress. No recommendations or requirements were made at this time. The home has recently applied to vary its registration. A satellite home, located approximately one mile from the home can now provide accommodation for two young people. In

total, the home can now offer care and accommodation for up to 12 young people.

The Statement of Purpose is fully up to date and reflects the new conditions of registration. As a result, young people, placing authorities, parents and carers can fully review the home's operation and offered services. The development plan clearly identifies the planned improvements for the home and is regularly reviewed. As a result, the home continues to make improvements and the Registered Manager is ambitious for further developing the home. Since the last inspection, all young people's bedrooms have been redecorated and young people have chosen their décor. The home has extended its provision to include a satellite home that can be used for young people to develop their independence and readiness for adulthood.

Regular visits from the organisation ensure that the quality of care is regularly checked and evaluated. The views of young people are sought and reports from these visits enable the Registered Manager to review the quality of the home's service. The manager's own monitoring is similarly effective. The progress of young people is regularly checked and detailed reports sent to parents, carers and placing social workers. All records are held securely and the confidentiality of young people respected at all times. This ensures that achievements are celebrated and concerns appropriately shared. Social workers value their relationships with the home. Comments from social workers include; 'the staff team make sure that the care plan is followed' and 'the staff team keep me fully updated, the reports are really good.'

All staff, including the Registered Manager, are regularly supervised and have their performance assessed. This enables staff to discuss their practice, developmental needs and any concerns about the progress that young people are making. The training needs of staff are, on the whole, well met. All staff are trained in child protection, fire safety, restraint, medication, first aid and either hold or are working towards the required level three qualification. However, the home's chosen method of restraint is not always regularly refreshed in line with the organisation's timescales. Although staff complete yearly refreshers, there is no current system in place that ensures that this happens within the prescribed 12 month period. There is no demonstrable impact on the outcomes for young people. However, a recommendation has been made to ensure that staff refresh their restraint training in line with the organisation's policy.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.