

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008270
Inspection date	10 February 2010
Inspector	Stella Henderson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 May 2009
--------------------------------	-------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 provides care for two young people of either sex aged between 10 and under 18 years old, with no more than a four year age gap, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The property is a semi-detached house which is situated in a suburb of a city. It is within commutable distance of leisure and sports facilities, shops and a selection of mainstream schools.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to undertake a full unannounced inspection. Six outcomes were inspected on this occasion; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation.

The quality of care is outstanding. Young people participated in this inspection and gave very positive feedback about their experience of being looked after. Safeguarding in its widest sense underpins all aspects of the running of the home.

Young people benefit from excellent support in relation to health and education and enjoy stable secure placements. A friendly, relaxed and nurturing environment enables young people to experience positive attachments with adults and develop friendships within the community.

There is excellent management oversight into how the home is running. Staff are well supported and effective quality assurance systems are in place to monitor and improve the quality of care that young people receive.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No requirements or recommendations were raised at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home has various systems in place to effectively promote young people's health. For example, young people are provided with a nutritious and varied diet ensuring their dietary needs are met. Fresh fruit, vegetables and drinks are readily available and home cooked food is provided.

Staff have a good understanding of young people's dietary needs. Young people are consulted about menus and are involved in the preparation of some meals. Young people also have the opportunity to eat out which helps them to develop their social skills. Staff ensure that the health of young people is also safeguarded through regular monitoring of fridge and freezer temperatures as well as observing kitchen health and safety practices.

Young people have their health needs comprehensively assessed and are registered with primary health care services. Records confirm that young people attend health care appointments regularly. Immunisations are recorded and kept up to date and specialist services are sought

for young people where needed. In this respect there is excellent liaison and involvement with external agencies, such as women's projects.

Staff work well with young people in a sensitive manner and recognise how best to help young people achieve a healthy and happy lifestyle. Young people are not on any kind of medication, but suitable procedures and storage are in place for this eventuality.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people stated that they feel very safe at the home. This is because their safety and welfare is very well promoted by effective policies, procedures and interventions. Staff are conversant with the needs of young people and are trained in how to respond and recognise any safeguarding issues that may emerge.

In line with good parenting, safeguarding extends to monitoring activities on the computer and promoting positive, safe friendships at school and in the community. Staff encourage young people to stay safe when out and about and support them to make choices which will enable them to do so.

Staff interact well with young people, providing a nurturing environment and ensuring that praise and recognition is given for achievements. Young people are of an age where dialogue and reasoning are important mechanisms for promoting positive behaviours and resolving differences, so the use of sanctions are minimal and restraint is never used. Young people are very settled in placement and so choose not to run away from the home, but sound procedures are in place to deal with any such episodes.

Bullying is not a problem at the home although if this were to arise it would be promptly addressed, and records show that staff are sensitive to the concerns and the differences of opinion of young people.

A formal complaints procedure is in place but there are several other less formal routes available for young people to register any concerns or complaints, such as the regulation 33 visitor and professionals from external agencies.

The promotion of physical security, health and safety is achieved through a wide range of routine checks which ensure that young people live in an environment that is safe. This includes young people's participation in fire-drills and a rigorous approach to risk assessment, including those for lone-working.

Young people's safety is protected by careful vetting of visitors to the home. Personnel files inspected contain all relevant information and checks to ensure no member of staff is allowed to work in the home until they are fully vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent individual support which helps to develop their individuality in line with their placement plans, choices and aspirations. Staff have developed highly effective links with a range of helping agencies and services to fit young people's needs. This means that young people have a wide range of resources to draw on.

The home emphasises the importance of educational achievement and the leisure interests of young people are very well supported, enabling them to achieve their potential in learning and social skills. Staff emotionally reinforce young people when they make a positive effort and do well, and celebrate their achievements. This helps them to develop a sense of positive self esteem and belief in themselves.

Young people who are in mainstream education have personal education plans in place. Staff have established good communication with local schools to enable young people to maximise learning opportunities and persevere with their education. Staff attend parents evenings which demonstrates to young people their commitment to their educational progress as well as reinforcing productive inter-agency working.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are successful at engaging with young people to achieve the aims and objectives of individual placement plans. In line with good parenting the development of young people is carefully monitored by daily observation, dialogue and more formal monitoring processes such as statutory reviews.

Young people are empowered to express their views and staff actively promote their engagement in care planning, review processes and the general running of the home. This gives young people a chance to participate and provides them with an element of control over decisions and outcomes.

Young people benefit from building trusting relationships with staff members, offering them the chance to experience positive adult attachments. This is facilitated by an effective key working system but also by the fact that young people can approach any of the staff team for help and support.

Young people are encouraged to maintain and develop constructive family relationships and friendships within the community. Files contain clear information relating to the contact arrangements agreed with the placing authority. Placements are stable and procedures are in place to ensure that admissions to and discharge from the home are positive experiences for young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

No young people are eligible for formal pathway planning or leaving care services but they gain some independence skills by undertaking some household tasks, such as cooking, keeping their rooms clean and looking after their pets. Importantly this also includes support where more considered, mature choices and decisions have to be made, such as networking in the local community and establishing friendships that are positive, safe and age-appropriate.

The non-stigmatizing approach to supporting young people in the community is a strength of the home. The home is indistinguishable from others in the area and staff create an atmosphere that is warm, nurturing and where friends are welcome.

Young people do the kind of things that young people typically do, such as inviting friends round for tea, keeping pets, socialising and participating in activities that reflect personal preferences as well as broaden experiences. Young people are, however, allowed to do nothing much at all if they so wish.

The home itself is warm, welcoming and provides a homely atmosphere. The property is well-maintained and the garden and outside area are also kept tidy and free from hazards.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people live in an environment that is consistently supportive, stable and safe. This inspires young people's trust in themselves and adults, increasing their motivation to positively engage. The home provides excellent conditions for young people to grow in confidence and self-esteem and increases their chances of fulfilling their potential.

The home delivers care to young people in a way that is consistent with the statement of purpose. This document includes the relevant skills, training, qualifications and experience of the staff team and summarises the home's key policies and procedures. It provides young people and others with useful information about the home and what services will be provided.

A committed and competent staff team led by highly effective management ensures that young people consistently receive care of the highest standard. Excellent record keeping facilitates good communication and partnership working, as well as effective monitoring of young people's progress and development. There is a 'continuous improvement' agenda within the home, this sustains good performance and contributes to overall outstanding practice and positive outcomes for young people.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff members consistently follow clear policies and procedures that emphasise the importance of individually tailored support. There is commitment towards the unconditional respect of young people's feelings and identity. This protects young people's individuality and ensures the implementation of anti-discriminatory practices.

Young people's welfare is promoted and safeguarded by staffing levels that are consistent with young people's needs, and mechanisms to monitor the quality of care. Regulation 33 and 34 audits highlight good practice as well as identify any shortfalls or concerns. An annual report is compiled from regulation 34 monitoring which gives a good picture of the home's performance over the year.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.