

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Alicea Churchward
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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 Crispins, 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 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 is registered to accommodate up-to-nine children and young people including one child with physical disabilities. There are two homes covered by a single registration. The main home is in a residential area and is close to community facilities and leisure pursuits. It is indistinguishable from surrounding properties and looks like a family home. At the time of this inspection, six children are accommodated.

There is a garden area to the rear of the property and plenty of space to play. The home has a range of facilities for the children living there and its gardens are well maintained. There is a two-bedded satellite home within 10 minutes travelling time of the main home, this is currently vacant.

At the time of this inspection six children and young people were present, they all fully participated in the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a full key inspection of this service. The purpose of the visit was to follow up recommendations made at the time of the last inspection and to inspect the service against the national minimum standards and Children's Homes Regulations 2002. All of the Every Child Matters outcome areas were also inspected.

This is an outstanding service in all key areas inspected. Children, young people and staff report very favourably about the quality of care and management provided by the home. There is excellent access to a variety of opportunities. Children and young people are integral to decision making and there is a wealth of evidence to show how their views make a difference to the service.

Practice at this home embraces the Every Child Matters framework that forms part of the vision to improve children's services. Outcomes for individual children and young people are excellent and demonstrate individualised care and support that reflects children and young people's needs exceptionally well.

The two recommendations made are having little impact upon the children and young people. The home has a very good history of compliance and a focus on exceeding national minimum standards and regulations.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection two recommendations were made, these were in respect of recording the outcome of all complaints and information on staff files. Both of these recommendations have been fully addressed by the registered person therefore practice is accountable in these areas.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people report that they like the meals served in the home, there is plenty of fresh fruit and they can prepare their own snacks. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan, shop for and prepare meals. Young people have access to a varied, balanced healthy diet. All staff undertake training in food hygiene, except new staff who are booked onto the next available course. Young people are encouraged to eat a healthy balanced diet and have good table manners. Staff have taken the young people to dine in restaurants, which the young people say they enjoyed very much.

Health planning is excellent and good health is promoted. Clear medical histories and immunisation histories are present. All health assessments are up to date and the home pro-actively pursues any matters arising to ensure that young people have access to specialised services to support their physical and emotional health. Outcomes of all medical appointments and any subsequent action taken are recorded well. Young people are well supported through activities to lead healthy lifestyles. Activities enjoyed include using the trampoline, walking, horse riding, rugby, football, visits to the farm and basketball.

Arrangements for the storage and administration of medication have not changed and remain outstanding. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that children's health and welfare are well promoted. A nominated member of staff oversees the management of medicines and regular monitoring is taking place. All permanent staff have received training in first aid. All children and young people have written consent to treatment contained in their files.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The staff respect children and young people's wish for privacy and confidentiality in a manner that is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect them. Children and young people confirm that this is the case. Information is stored and handled in a confidential manner. There is one minor shortfall in the records of room searches; it is not signed by all staff present.

All children and young people are very much aware of their right to make a complaint about any aspect of their care in the home. Staff give support to young

people making any complaint. Records demonstrate that complaints are taken seriously, responded to without delay and young people's views are taken into account. Young people have access to a variety of independent persons should they wish to raise any issues outside of the home, they also have access to free telephone numbers in the children's guide. Some of the young people have also been part of the council for young people in care with the local authority.

Staff undertake basic child protection awareness during their induction to the home and are subsequently included in the training programme. Staff are aware of how to recognise and respond to any matters that may impact upon young people's safety. The home has good links with the Local Authority Designated Officer to which they have reported concerns to. There is a multi-disciplinary approach to safeguarding the welfare of young people which includes their local authority social workers, team managers, safeguarding and the local police.

There is a wide age range between some of the children and young people placed. There has been some bullying in the form of name calling, however young people report staff respond to any issues and any bullying gets sorted out. Issues are regularly discussed in the children's meetings. The registered person and the staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable.

There are records of any unauthorised absence by any young person. Mainly young people are settled in their placements. Staff follow their own procedures and a joint protocol with the local police in reporting and managing any absences. Individual risk assessments give a clear overview of risk to any young people's welfare during a period of absence. Young people say they do not go missing due to any issues in the home, that they are going missing due to other issues and acquaintances outside of the home.

Behaviour is managed very well. Boundaries are regularly re-enforced by the staff in the home, children and young people know what behaviour is acceptable. Incentives and lots of verbal praise are used to encourage acceptable behaviour. There is a good behaviour management policy in place and all staff are trained in positive behaviour management and the need to physically intervene if necessary. Record of sanctions and restraint are comprehensive and give a good overview of any incidents leading up to the use of such measures. Young people have their view written in the records maintained by the home.

The home provides children and young people with a safe environment. There are regular checks and maintenance of gas, electricity and fire equipment. There is a fire risk assessment in place and all young people have been involved in a drill to ensure that they know how to get out of the home in the event of a fire. There are risk assessments in relation to individual young people, activities and the building which are subject to regular review.

Staff recruitment files are kept by the home, they are orderly, accessible and those sampled contain all of the required information. There are thorough vetting procedures to ensure that staff wishing to work in the home are safe. Staff follow the

visitors procedure in practice and the home is secure from unauthorised access adding to the safety of children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people have their needs robustly assessed and these are met by the comprehensive placement plans. Additional guidance and support is provided through a variety of sources. Children and young people say they can speak to the staff and the management in the home and they have excellent access and support, this ensures that their needs are very well met.

All of the children and young people have access to education. Young people who have missed part of their education now attend mainstream schools and are doing remarkably well. Educational outcomes for children and young people are steadily improving for some, much improved for others and attendance is excellent. The education of children is very actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Young people have excellent access and opportunities, the ethos in the home is that attending school or a school programme is a normal everyday activity in which all of children and young people are expected to attend.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Comprehensive and detailed placement plans and information are held on the children. Staff and the home's management team possess good knowledge and understanding of each child's needs. It is clear that staff and the management team at this home are proactive when managing placements and have maintained good continuity in the lives of the children and young people.

Contact arrangements are excellent and clearly outlined in individual placement plans. children and young people are encouraged to have contact with their families at a pace which suits them, re-enforcing a child- centred approach to listening and acting upon their wishes and feelings. All records of contact are comprehensive.

The home's management team have established excellent systems to manage placement arrangements. All admissions are planned wherever possible. Good consultation at an early stage allows individuals assessed needs and preferences to be known allowing a coordinated response to be taken from the start of the placement. Referrals are matched to staff's skills and experience as well as ensuring compatibility between the existing young people.

Good communication and appropriate consultation between staff, children and their parents, social workers and other professionals is evident. Young people are

encouraged to contribute to their care planning, the day-to-day running of the home and in regular children's meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Pathway assessment is underway for some young people. The home supports each child and young person based upon their age and understanding to help out and be responsible for their home. This is observed in practice at meal times during this visit. Young people are responsible for their bedrooms and bringing down their laundry.

The home successfully achieves attainment of independence skills and caring for the children and young people without overburdening them with such responsibilities. Young people are encouraged to have their individual interests and friends outside of the home which enables them to maintain networks outside of the care system.

Children and young people enjoy very homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained to a very high standard, providing excellent facilities for their use. The home is appropriately located and designed, it does not have any features which identify it as a children's home, it is in keeping with the neighbourhood. Young people have access to games, books, laptops, musical equipment, bicycles, games consoles and a large trampoline in their garden. The gardens are well maintained and there is plenty of space for ball games to the rear of the property.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home has a clear child-centred philosophy of care outlined within the Statement of Purpose and children's guide. There is good evidence to show that this is being applied in practice. The home offers a nurturing and welcoming environment with high aspirations for the children and young people in their care.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff undertake work with the young people to enhance their understanding of disadvantage and cultural difference. They ensure that there is a good mix of male and female staff on duty at all times. Young people have sampled food from different cultures and celebrated national homelessness week.

There is a clear on call system and arrangements to deputise in the absence of the manager. The staffing structure has not experienced many changes between inspections. Staff retention has been good. Deployment of staff is good. Each shift has a nominated team or shift leader. Rotas demonstrate that excellent staffing levels are maintained.

Staff are clear about their roles, balancing their work so that the individual and

collective needs of the young people are met; whilst ensuring that the necessary administrative tasks are undertaken. Safe working practices are evident. Staff displayed a great deal of interest and enthusiasm throughout the inspection. They speak very positively about the children and young people in their care.

Supervision frequency and recording was discussed and one shortfall was evident in terms of the frequency of supervising newly appointed staff. The management at the home have suitable systems to manage staff personal development and appraisal. Staff have regular reviews of their performance.

Records at this home show clarity of purpose in how staff are being managed. It is evident from discussions with staff that induction and foundation training is also being provided. There is also written evidence to confirm that a good level of training is being provided.

The registered person of the home monitors and signs the home's records at least once a month, to identify any patterns or issues requiring action. They take action to improve or adjust provisions where necessary. Monitoring and the overall development of the home is outstanding.

Young people's files are stored securely and confidentially. Young people are aware of their right to access information held by the home.

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 that new staff are supervised fortnightly during the first 6 months of their employment. Those employed infrequently must receive one-to-one supervision no less frequently than after each 8 shifts (NMS 28.2)
- ensure that records of room searches are signed by all those present (NMS 9.8)