

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008485
Inspection date	25 January 2010
Inspector	Alicea Churchward
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 August 2009
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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 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 is registered to accommodate up to 9 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, seven children are accommodated. There is a large garden area to the rear of the property and plenty of space to play. The home has excellent 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 which currently accommodates two young people.

Summary

This is an unannounced interim inspection. The purpose of the visit was to assess how the home is currently meeting the key national minimum standards in respect of the staying safe section of the Every Child Matters outcomes, and also to monitor how requirements and recommendations have been met from the last inspection. The home's Registered Manager was present for the inspection and was given verbal feedback at the end of the inspection process.

Children and young people are very positive about the progress they are making at the home and about their relationships with the staff. Two minor shortfalls were found in relation to records of absence and restraint.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

All recommendations made at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed. These were, ensuring that the first aid box is returned to the home, periodically holding a fire drill at night, and recording the religious needs of children and how those needs will be met in their placement plans.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

A recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that first aid boxes are provided in the home. This has been fully addressed and the box has been returned to the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people report that their privacy is maintained in the home. Information is stored and handled in a confidential manner.

Young people know how to make complaints. The home has a clear complaints policy in place and maintains records of any complaints and their outcomes. Young people confirm that their complaints are dealt with properly and that they are satisfied with the outcome. Complaints are dealt with within the organisations timescales. There is a clear procedure in place. Children

and young people have regular contact with their children's rights officers and some participate in the children's rights council.

Staff are very clear about their role in recognising and responding to safeguarding matters. The home has links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and has liaised with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Safeguarding is managed well. The home has a good policy in place in respect of action to be taken in the event of such matters. The organisation has a clear whistle blowing policy in place.

No bullying was reported; young people are settled and have been in placement for long periods of time. Work has been undertaken with them and they know what effects bullying has upon others. Play fighting is discouraged through the use of sanctions to reduce any incidents.

The home maintains records of any absence without authority. This includes a chronology of events and conforms to the organisations policy. The record does not always include the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for leaving, and any action taken in the light of those reasons. Triggers that may cause such behaviours are known and staff respond accordingly to ensure the safety of the children and young people. Staff search the local area thoroughly and follow the joint police protocol for reporting absence.

The home focuses upon maintaining positive relationships with the children and young people. Being courteous and respectful is at the heart of interactions. Boundaries are regularly reinforced and good behaviour is rewarded and promoted. Staff have received training in positive behaviour management and are able to effectively hold or restrain children if necessary. The home maintains records of sanctions and restraint. Sanctions are tailored towards individual children and young people; they are effective. The sanctions record has separated from the binding and therefore does not meet the standard. There are records of restraint which meet with regulation, but the duration of an incident has been recorded rather than the duration of restraint in one case.

The home maintains records of risk assessments for the home, young people and activities, these are subject to regular review. There is an up-to-date fire risk assessment and records of maintenance of the fire alarm, fire equipment and drills. At the time of the last inspection a recommendation was made in respect of ensuring that a fire drill takes place at night, the records now include the times of the drills and this has been addressed. No hazards to the safety of children or young people were observed during this inspection.

A sample of staff files inspected were orderly and accessible. The registered person has taken time to ensure that the files contain all of the information required by regulation. The reference request for staff clearly asks previous employers if there are any concerns regarding the suitability of the person to work with children. All staff have an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check before commencing employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

At the time of the last inspection a recommendation was made in relation to ensuring that placement plans include the religious needs of individual children and young people and how those needs will be met. This has been fully addressed the information is now present.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that the records of unauthorised absence include the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for leaving, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that the record of sanctions is bound and that the records of the duration of any restraint is clearly noted (NMS 22.9 and NMS 22.10)