

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008486
Inspection date	21 January 2010
Inspector	Mark Kersh
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 August 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

This is a children's home that is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender. It is owned and run by a private organisation. The property is a semi-detached house, situated on a busy main road. There is good access from the home to public transport facilities and local amenities, such as shops, leisure facilities, schools and colleges.

There is sufficient private and communal space in the home. Accommodation is spread over three floors, with storage and laundry facilities in the basement. On the ground floor, there are two lounges and a dining kitchen. The young people's bedrooms, bath and toilet facilities are on the first and second floors. There are two bedrooms on the second floor, one of these doubles as an office.

There are currently six young people living at the home. Two young people were present and contributed to the inspection.

Summary

This unannounced interim inspection looked at the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection and the outcome areas of staying safe, positive contribution and organisation. The outcome areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving and economic well-being were not inspected.

The home continues to provide a good level of care for young people and has reached some outstanding outcomes. Good safeguarding measures are in place and staff work alongside young people to ensure their health, safety and well-being is maintained and promoted.

Care planning documentation and records are individualised and detailed in content. Excellent consultation takes place with those who use the service. Staff are well supported by the management team through team meetings, training and supervision.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the previous inspection there were three recommendations and one requirement made. The Registered Manager was asked to ensure staff fully complete the records when any sanction is imposed. The Registered Manager was asked to ensure the opinions and views of parents, placing authorities and young people are ascertained. And for all staff to complete a relevant qualification. There has been a good response following the implementation of feedback forms used to consult with parents, placing authorities and young people. These forms are monitored and the home acts on any suggestions made. The recommendations for sanction records and for staff to complete a relevant qualification has been carried forward; following this inspection. The requirement in relation to a comprehensive report being issued following the visits undertaken on behalf of the registered provider has been complied with.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff deal with confidential information in a sensitive manner and they respect young people's privacy and dignity. Complaints are taken seriously and these are recorded appropriately, where they have occurred. Young people have access to the Children's Rights Service to support them with any issues they have with their placing authority. The home has a missing person's policy, which staff use to protect young people where they absent themselves without authority. Relevant authorities are notified of a young person's absence, to promote their safe return.

Staff take all reasonable steps to keep young people safe from harm, all staff have completed child protection training. They demonstrate well the action to take in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The home has a clear policy on bullying, any identified issues or incidents would be fully addressed and recorded. The home is effective in addressing issues around bullying, and staff and young people say there are currently no bullying issues in the home.

Young people's behaviour is managed well and there are systems in place to promote their welfare. Young people have positive relationships with staff who maintain firm boundaries and act as good role models to young people. Detailed behaviour management plans demonstrate how individual behaviours are minimised. All staff are trained in behaviour management and safe restraint techniques. Systems are in place to ensure detailed records of sanctions and restraint takes place. Rewards feature far more than sanctions and restraint is rarely used. The sanction records are set out to show the effectiveness of each sanction imposed. However, this section is not routinely completed, and in such cases the effectiveness of monitoring is not evident.

Young people, staff and visitors are protected by the measures taken to ensure all have a clear understanding of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire. Clear evacuation and assembly point instructions are given to young people, staff and visitors, all of which are recorded. Regular fire prevention checks are carried out and there are detailed written risk assessments in place, which show the action to take in respect of any identified hazard.

Ofsted has undertaken an audit of staff personnel files in May 2009; any shortfalls found are being addressed by the provider. There are no recruitment issues within this home as the Registered Manager is fully involved in this process and ensures all of the necessary vetting checks are returned before new staff commence work in the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have detailed written placement plan trackers, which specify and cover their individual needs. Each plan routinely covers young people's health, emotional, social, educational, cultural and religious need. Staff use these plans daily to provide young people with good support, in accordance with their assessed needs. Young people's individual plans are updated, each month, to reflect their changing needs and individual circumstances.

Young people are encouraged to participate in their statutory review or to contribute if they are unable to attend. Key workers act as excellent advocates on behalf of young people to ensure their views are represented or to support them to express their views.

The support for contact with family and friends is outstanding. Young people have the opportunity to maintain contact by telephone, email, and by visiting family or family and friends visiting them in this home. For those young people without family contact, staff are proactive and ensure contact arrangements are made with relevant agencies to provide young people with independent support.

Young people's views are regularly sought through their involvement in resident group meetings and individual key worker sessions. Each ensures young people are consulted and involved. In addition, young people complete questionnaires in relation to how they feel they are cared for. Any issues young people comment on are discussed with their individual key worker. Returned feedback sheets from parents and placing social workers, report they have a good or excellent relationship with the home and that communication is very good.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has a written statement of purpose and a children's guide. Both documents provide young people and their families with useful information about the home and the services it provides. The guide is written in a child friendly format, making it easy for young people to read.

Staff are sufficient in number to meet young people's needs. They are supported well by the management team who have a strong commitment and focus on improvement. Staff work well with young people individually and as a group to encourage positive relationships with each other. Staff fully engage young people in direct work to explore stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and bullying. They provide young people with a broad range of reading materials and posters about other people's faiths, cultures and traditions, and they ensure all young people receive the same positive opportunities.

Most of the staff team have completed their national vocational qualification award, with new staff due to commence this training shortly. All staff have all completed mandatory training, as part of their induction, to help them in the work they perform. Specific training is available for staff along with refresher training in relation to caring for some specific needs of young people.

The Registered Manager has an effective monitoring system for checking the homes internal administration systems. Any shortfalls identified during this process are promptly addressed and resolved. Persons independent of the home carry out quality assurance visits and produce a report for the home each month. Such visits include discussions with young people and staff.

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

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

- ensure sanction records are completed as specified within the sanction book (NMS 22)
- ensure that at least 80% of all staff have a qualification at NVQ level 3 or an equivalent qualification. (NMS 29.5)