

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	1 June 2009
Inspector	Helen Humphreys
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 February 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 owned and managed by a large private organisation. The home, provides single room accommodation for four young people who may have an attachment disorder, or related difficulties.

The home aims to provide care on a medium to long term basis and provides accommodation, care, food, clothing and activities.

Education is provided in a registered school for children, owned by the organisation at an additional cost.

Therapy is provided by the organisation, at an alternative base and is provided as part of the care package.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection and all the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) were inspected.

This home is providing good care to the young people who are placed, most of whom enjoy living at the home and are making satisfactory progress. The young people enjoy good relationships with the staff who they find to be kind and helpful. The young people are making good progress at school and enjoy a range of activities in the community. The manager exercises strong leadership skills and the staff team are competent and experienced and most have appropriate qualification. However the grounds are unkempt and the computer for use by the young people is broken. The young people would like some outdoor play equipment which is a reasonable request. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

One recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that the information recorded following the use of sanctions and restraint is clear and not misleading. Although the records have improved and the manager continues to monitor this, some language remains misleading. However the manager is aware of this and continues to monitor and discuss with the staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The young people are provided with a good healthy diet which is varied and nutritious. The young people take an active part in choosing the menus and ensuring that they eat and understand about matters including '5 a day' by using the interactive chart supplied on a Government website. The manager and some staff have undertaken a 'E learning' course of healthy eating and found this helpful and have used the information gained with the young people. The young people have opportunity to shop and prepare food and the dining arrangements are good, staff and young people eat meals together.

The staff promote the health and well being of the young people very well. They work in conjunction with a range of agencies including the Looked After Children Nurse who has also provided some training. The health care plans are detailed and provide good information for the staff about the health of the young people and what they need to do to promote this. All young people are undertaking therapy provided externally by the agency.

The arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are good. Staff have undertaken training and the records are detailed and well kept. The manager checks the records weekly and the stock control system is accurate. The arrangements for the disposal of medication are very good including obtaining the receipt of collection from the local chemist.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff promote the privacy of the young people. Young people can lock their bedroom doors from the inside and the staff are currently deciding whether older young people can have their own keys. Confidential information is stored safely and young people can use a cordless phone in private as required.

The young people are provided with good clear information on how they can make complaints should they wish to. They have confidence in the process and aware of who they can contact including Ofsted. The records are clear and well kept. The young people have access to external agencies and the local Children's Right's Officer.

The staff have been trained in safeguarding and have access to appropriate policy and procedure. Recent child protection matters have been dealt with appropriately and young people say that they feel safe whilst living at the home.

Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately and young people have confidence in the staff to deal with matters. Incidents of bullying are recorded and followed up in therapy or key working sessions if required.

Recently, young people missing from the home has become problematic for the staff and raised concerns about the overall safety of the young people in the community. The staff have been taking appropriate action and were hopeful that decisions taken on the day of the inspection were going to have a clear impact.

The staff encourage socially acceptable behaviour with the young people. There is limited use of sanctions and young people are rewarded when they do well or avoid getting into more difficulty. There is an increase in the number of times that physical restraint has been used and this is being monitored and the manager was hopeful that other plans in hand would be effective in making some significant changes. However some concerns remain about the occasional use of language which does not always describe exactly the behaviour of the young people.

The young people live in a home which provides good physical safety. The arrangements for fire safety, health and safety and risk assessment are good. The risk assessments are detailed and provide good information for the staff on how to safeguard the young people and these are regularly monitored and updated.

The arrangements for the recruitment and selection of staff are good and were checked as part of the audit of the whole organisation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff understand the individual needs of the young people placed and these are outlined in the detailed placement plans. The staff are aware of their needs and how to work with them effectively. The plans include details of any needs arising out of needs relating to disability, faith or culture and so on. All of the young people receive therapy which is provided by the organisation and is part of the care package provided.

All of the young people attend school and are making good progress. The staff support the young people well by providing transport, help with home work and advocating on their behalf. Good relationships exist between home and the school which promotes better understanding of the needs of the young people. The computer to help young people with school work is currently not working.

The young people take part in a range of activities both within the home and in the community. Books, games activities, televisions and computer games are available in the home and the young people would like some outdoor play equipment to use in the garden. All of the young people take part in a range of regular activities in the community including dancing, swimming, and ground green bowling. The majority of the young people enjoy the activities which encourage fitness and social inclusion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The placement plans are detailed and set out clearly the needs of the young people and how the staff are going to meet them. There is evidence of monitoring and review and most young people are making good progress at the home. The young people attend their statutory reviews and are supported by the staff who will also advocate to ensure that the process is meaningful to them.

The arrangements for contact are good, recorded on file and known to the young people. The staff support contact in a range of ways including providing private space, transport and meals. The staff work in partnership with majority of parents and carers and in particular actively support plans where young people are to return to live at home.

The young people have opportunities to influence the running of the home and have choices over their daily living arrangements. The staff meet regularly with the young people. The young people feel that the majority of the meetings are helpful and suggestions that they have made have been implemented. The young people can make choices over simple day to day matters like activities, TV programmes and meals.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The young people have the opportunity to develop skills for independent living. This is done through providing opportunities for young people to learn cooking , laundry skills, budget and

generally looking after themselves. The age and contact restrictions, limits the opportunities the young people have but the manager and staff are aware of this matter.

The home is situated close to transport networks and community facilities. There is good communal and personal space and bathrooms are appropriately sited. The young people like their bedrooms which are well furnished, warm and inviting. The manager and staff ensure that the home is clean, tidy, decorated and furnished appropriately. The porch is in a poor state of repair but plans were in hand for the work on this to start.

However the grounds are unkempt and have been for some time. The impact of this is that the home looks uncared for and makes it distinguishable from other properties in the road who have very well kept gardens.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff have undertaken training and understand the needs of the young people placed. The manager and staff ensure that all cultural and religious events and festivals are explored and explained in a child friendly format. This often takes place in residents meetings and involves a quiz created by staff to educate the young people. The internal décor of the home includes pictures and symbols to promote difference and different communities from around the world.

The statement of purpose and children's guide provides good and helpful information for the young people and professionals.

The home employs a sufficient number of competent and experienced staff. Some of the staff have a relevant qualification and plans are in hand for others to undertake National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), in order to meet the NMS and improve further the overall quality of the care provided. The young people like the staff who they describe as being kind and helpful. The staff have access to a range of training opportunities, supervision, annual appraisals to support them and they find this helpful and useful.

The arrangements for the internal and external monitoring of the home are good. The reports produced following the external monitoring are detailed and helpful to the manager. The internal arrangements are good and contribute to improvement of the care provided.

The young people's files are kept in good order and securely stored. They contain a sufficient number of documents which the staff need in order to care for the young people appropriately.

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 Children's 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 young people have access to a computer to assist their learning (NMS 14.5)
- provide some outdoor play equipment (NMS 15.7)
- ensure that garden and grounds are continually well maintained and safe (NMS 24.3)