

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008600
Inspection date	10/05/2013
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/11/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned and is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **adequate**.

Young people are given a good level of individualised care and support from staff. This enables them to make progress in a number of areas of their lives from their starting point on admission to the home. They are supported to develop a healthy lifestyle and overall their general health improves over time in the home. Young people themselves say that they feel safe in the home and that bullying is not an issue. Professionals confirm that they are cared for safely. Overall, young people have positive relationships with staff. They are regularly consulted about their care and they feel that their views matter.

Staff actively promote the value of education and work hard to support young people to attend. Some young people go to school very regularly and make steady progress. However, a number of young people have a very poor level of attendance at school and consequently they do not achieve their individual potential.

The home is managed effectively. The manager monitors the progress young people make in the home and the quality of care they are given. She takes prompt action to address any shortfall that is identified in order to improve the service. The home has a clear development plan that identifies the work that will be done to secure continuous improvements for the benefit of young people.

One requirement and two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to restraint records, young people's education and an aspect of staff training.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17A (2001)	ensure that all records of measures of restraint include details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure. (Regulation 17 (4)(b))	31/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people attend school, college or alternative provision regularly (NMS 8.3)
- ensure that all staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of young people. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people are fully supported to develop a healthy lifestyle. They are all registered with primary health care services and attend routine health appointments. This ensures that their general health is monitored. Staff provide nutritious meals for young people and encourage them to help to plan and cook their menus so that they develop an understanding of how to maintain a healthy diet. Staff have good links with health agencies outside the home, such as psychological services and substance misuse teams and they make sure that young people have access to these services when they need to. Staff ensure that young people have information and advice about health issues, such as sexual health, smoking and substance misuse. All young people are encouraged to take part in activities that promote exercise and support their health, such as gym classes, swimming and football. Some young people take part regularly, but others choose not to.

The home's arrangements for managing medication are sound, protecting young people and supporting their good health.

Some young people make good steady progress in education because they attend school regularly. Other young people however have a poor record of attendance at school. This impacts on the progress that they are able to make.

Young people have a good understanding of their history and background. Their on going contact with families is promoted and facilitated by staff in line with their local authority care plans. This supports their sense of identity and their emotional well-being.

Young people are encouraged to prepare emotionally and practically for future independence at a pace that is appropriate to their individual needs. Some young people keep in touch with staff after they leave care which enables staff to give them on going informal support to help them to settle into independence.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people are well cared for in line with their local authority care plan. Staff develop placement plans in consultation with the young people themselves. These plans are holistic and individualised. They address all aspects of young people's needs, including those that arise specifically from their cultural background and religion. Placement plans are regularly reviewed and kept up to date in order to ensure that young people's assessed needs are being met and their progress is monitored. Young people are supported to be fully involved in their own reviews. This ensures that their views are incorporated into their plans and they are part of all the decisions that are made about their care.

Care staff work closely with social workers and other agencies to promote the welfare of young people. Professionals involved with the home report that communication from the manager and staff is good and that they are kept fully informed about the progress young people make. This promotes consistency for young people. Professionals confirm that care in the home is good and that staff work very hard to engage with young people. One said, 'They have really stuck with (name). They go the extra mile to support him.'

Staff promote and reward positive behaviour in order to help young people to learn to manage conflict and difficulties in their lives in a positive way. Professionals involved with the home report that staff respond well to young people when their behaviour becomes challenging or aggressive and that as a result the behaviour of young people improves over time.

Education is valued in the home and staff work hard to support young people to attend. Some young people have not attended school for some time when they are admitted to the home. Staff liaise closely with other agencies to ensure that an appropriate provision is identified for them and they encourage young people to attend. With the support of staff, some young people do engage with education and they attend school very regularly. For example, one social worker said that staff, 'Have been very good at facilitating (name) transport to school' and that as a result the young person is attending every day and is making steady progress. Other young people's attendance at school remains poor however, in spite of the work done by

staff and other professionals from outside the home. This limits their ability to make progress in education.

Young people understand how to make a complaint. They have positive relationships with staff and feel confident about raising issues with them. Consequently they feel that their views are listened to and acted on.

Young people benefit from living in a homely environment that is kept safe, is comfortably furnished and maintained to a good standard. They are encouraged to personalise their own rooms and to help to choose the decoration in communal areas. This helps them to develop a sense of ownership of their home and promotes their sense of self-worth. The home is suitably located in a residential area with good access to public transport links so that young people can travel easily to local facilities and neighbouring towns and cities.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

There are good arrangements in place in the home to ensure that young people are protected from harm. These include clear risk assessments and detailed procedures to guide staff practice. Risk assessments are individualised to young people's needs and they are reviewed to ensure they are up to date and continue to protect young people. Young people themselves report that they feel safe and professionals involved with the home confirm that young people are cared for safely. Staff understand the home's safeguarding procedure and consequently they know how to report and manage safeguarding concerns in order to protect young people.

Bullying is not an issue in the home. Staff make sure that young people are appropriately monitored and supported so that any possible concerns are identified and promptly responded to.

Some young people have a history of going missing from home or care before they come to live in the home. Staff understand the vulnerabilities of young people. They undertake individual work with them to lessen the likelihood of them going missing and being at risk when they are away from the home. Consequently, as they settle into the home, the frequency with which young people go missing reduces. Staff work effectively with other agencies such as the police and placing social workers to ensure that young people are protected if they do go missing.

Staff are trained to respond positively to challenging behaviour. This includes training in the use of physical restraints. Individual behaviour support plans clearly identify strategies for minimising the likelihood of young people's behaviour becoming challenging and for managing incidents that may arise. Restraint is only ever used when it is necessary to keep young people and staff safe and there has been only one incident of physical intervention since the last inspection. All incidents of restraint are clearly recorded in a bound volume which meets the regulations. However one incident was not recorded in enough detail to clearly identify what staff

had done to defuse the situation. The manager checks the records regularly and had identified this as a matter requiring improvement. Professionals involved with the home report that staff have worked very well to help some young people manage their own behaviour more appropriately and overall young people behave well towards one another and staff.

The home's procedures for vetting staff are thorough, ensuring that all staff are checked and assessed as suitable before they start work. Visitors to the home are also checked and their whereabouts monitored during their visit. These arrangements protect young people from unsuitable individuals gaining access to the home.

The home is kept safe for young people, staff and visitors through a robust system of health and safety risk assessments and regular checks on equipment and on the home itself. Staff are trained in fire evacuation procedures and they and young people take part in regular fire drills. This ensures that young people know how to leave the home safely in an emergency.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is well staffed and managed effectively. The manager is qualified and experienced and provides good leadership to the team. Care staff are very positive about the young people they look after and they have a very good understanding of their specific needs and plans. Consequently, they are able to work effectively to support young people to make progress.

Staff report that they are well supported by their manager. They have regular supervision which enables them to discuss their care of young people and their training and development needs. They also attend regular staff team meetings which promote good team working and therefore consistency of care for young people.

All staff are expected to be qualified and the organisation gives them support to ensure that this is achieved. The majority of staff have completed a relevant qualification and newer staff are working towards it. Training opportunities for staff are generally good and this enables them to develop and maintain the knowledge and skills they need for their work. However, at the time of this inspection, newly appointed staff had not yet had formal safeguarding training. Also a member of staff had been involved in an incident of physical intervention before they had completed the specific behaviour management training that is used in this home. There is no evidence that these shortfalls have had any negative impact on the welfare of young people and the manager has taken steps to ensure that all staff have completed the required training.

Young people, their families and professionals involved with the home are given clear written information about how the home works and how young people are cared for.

This is provided in the Statement of Purpose and the young person's guide to the service. These documents are regularly reviewed to make sure that the information is accurate and up to date.

There have been no complaints about the home from the local community and the manager and staff have maintained positive relationships with neighbours. This helps young people to feel safe in their community.

Robust management systems ensure that the welfare of young people and the progress they make is regularly monitored. The views of young people, their families and professionals are regularly sought as part of these processes. Copies of the reports made of these checks are sent to Ofsted within the required timescales. The manager takes prompt action to address any issues that are identified at inspection or through management monitoring in order to promote continuous improvement in the service. The home's development plan is detailed with clear goals and targets for improvement. The manager regularly monitors the progress the home is making against these targets.

Notifications of all significant incidents are sent to relevant authorities within the required timescales. These documents confirm that the manager and staff take appropriate action to keep young people safe.

The home maintains good information about young people to support their understanding of their history and life in the home. Young people are encouraged to read and contribute to their records so that their views are incorporated. All information is stored securely to protect young people's right to confidentiality.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.