

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC010699
Inspection date	10/02/2011
Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	06/07/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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 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

This children's home is registered to provide care, support and accommodation for five young people of either gender between the ages of 12 and 16 years old. The home is owned by a private provider and is a family-run business. The Registered Manager is also the registered provider. The house has a kitchen/diner, lounge, meeting room, bathroom, five en-suite first-floor bedrooms and a garden to the rear of the premises.

At the time of the inspection, four young people were in placement at the home, one agreed to participate with the inspection process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The purpose of the unannounced interim inspection of the home was to assess the service against national minimum standards, focussing primarily on keeping young people safe, and also to gauge improvement to service provision since the last inspection. The home had recently participated in an Ofsted inspection pilot project. Any requirements or recommendations resulting from the pilot were also reviewed during this inspection.

Overall, the level of care and support offered by the home is good. Young people indicate that they feel safe while in placement and staff show great interest in their care and well-being. All required policies and procedures are in place and staff practices are sound.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last key inspection resulted in seven actions and one recommendation. These covered a range of issues and outcome areas. This inspection finds that all outstanding issues have been resolved satisfactorily. The Ofsted pilot programme inspection was conducted following the home's last key inspection. This inspection resulted in five actions and four recommendations. All issues, with the exception of one action point relating to the home's monitoring systems, have been addressed satisfactorily.

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.

Young people comment that they feel staff respect their need for privacy well. Each young person has their own bedroom and can retire there any time they wish. Young people and staff relationships are positive. There are good policies in place that support staff in their practice to respect young people's privacy and this is monitored by the registered person. Similarly, with regard to confidentiality, there is well-written policy guidance available to staff that supports good practice. Young people's written information is secure and maintained confidentially in the staff office. Information that is held electronically is protected by an individual password system. The home has sufficient washing and bathing facilities that ensure young people's privacy as all young people's bedrooms have en-suite facilities.

With regards to complaints, young people comment that they are aware of the home's complaints procedure as staff talk to them about this and there is written guidance in the home's guide for young people. There have been no complaints made against the home since the last inspection. Young people benefit from clear and detailed written guidance available to them and staff that outline well the home's complaints procedure.

The service has clear and comprehensive child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures in place and young people benefit from this. Staff are familiar with the home's written guidance and receive child protection training upon induction and periodically thereafter. Young people comment that they feel safe living in the home and that staff encourage them to reflect upon their personal safety both while in the home and when they are in the community. There have been no allegations made of any kind since the last inspection and staff have a good working relationship with the placing authorities. This acts to further promote the well-being and safety of young people while in placement at the home.

Staff indicate that bullying is a very rare occurrence in the home and young people confirm this to be the case. The home has detailed written guidance to staff with regard to the management of bullying; young people are aware the home's zero tolerance of bullying as this information features in the home's children's guide.

Incidents of young people absconding from the home without permission are rare. The home has good policies and practices in place to address young people who are deemed 'missing' and these are well known to young people. Staff are consistent in the action taken to try and locate young people when they have not returned to the home when expected. In these events, the appropriate authorities are notified. Staff

encourage young people to keep in contact with the service if they are absent without permission; young people confirm that this is the practice of the home. Upon young people's return home, staff sensitively hold discussions with them, focussing on the risks posed by such behaviour and offering support. Staff record these discussions on the home's 'de-briefing' form.

The home has comprehensive behaviour management policies in place which are well known to staff and young people. Staff make use of rewards to encourage acceptable and positive behaviour; such rewards are generally in the form of additional funding for treats, outings and activities of young people's choosing. The home has a sanctions policy in place to address young people's unacceptable behaviour. However, staff rarely make use of this form of discipline. There have been no sanctions imposed since the last inspection. Managers comment that it is often more effective to speak with young people and be clear about the impact of their behaviour rather than respond punitively. This is a very effective ethos; young people's behaviour is generally very positive and they respond well to staff's reinforcement of positive behaviour. Young people are appreciative of the home's behaviour management strategies.

The previous inspection highlighted that staff had not received on training physical intervention, although staff have never had to restrain a young person. Managers are clear that the use of restraint is not permitted in the home. However, they acknowledged that emergency situations may arise where staff may be required to restrain young people for their own safety. Therefore, since the last inspection all staff have received training in physical restraint and relevant policies are in place. It remains the home's stance that such intervention is not permitted except in extreme circumstances.

The home's premises offer young people a good level of physical safety and security. Young people comment that they feel the building is secure. The home has detailed health and safety policies and procedures in place and young people are aware of key safety issues such as the home's evacuation procedures. The home has sound fire precaution systems in place; these include the weekly checking of the home's fire alarm and fire equipment. Staff conduct monthly fire drills and encourage young people to participate safely. Staff ensure that the home's fire doors are kept closed appropriately. The home has detailed building risk assessments in place and staff routinely conduct premises checks.

Young people benefit from the home's robust staff vetting procedures. Since the last inspection, new staff have been appointed to work in the home. Staff personnel files evidence all required vetting information, including satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau checks.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people benefit from a well-run home. The service is run as a family business and staff are very attentive to the needs of the young people. Staff and young people share an excellent relationship with each other, and young people are appreciative of the home's sensitive approach to care. The home provides good quality of care. The previous inspection highlighted weaknesses in the home's monitoring systems. In particular, this highlighted that managers of the home did not review consistently the home's operation. Managers continue to develop systems to facilitate more effective monitoring. This action is, therefore, repeated.

This inspection finds that, while Regulation 33 visits are conducted consistently, monitoring visit reports are often repetitious and young people do not benefit from the quality of these reports. In addition, regulation 33 reports are not consistently forwarded to Ofsted as required.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
34	establish and maintain a system for monitoring matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals (Regulation 34(1)(a))	01/04/2011
33	supply to Ofsted a report of monthly Regulation 33 monitoring visits (Regulation 34(2))	01/04/2011

