

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC013598
Inspection date	20/07/2012
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	12/03/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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 children's home is registered to offer short break placements for children and young people with learning and physical disabilities and sensory impairment. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation and is registered for 14 children.

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 **good**.

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and outcomes for young people using the service are excellent. Staff have high aspirations for all young people and their effective relationships with parents, carers and external professionals contribute to highly individualised needs based care plans. This approach ensures smooth transitions and consistency in care from home, school and the service. Young people enjoy staying at the service and think staff are 'nice' and 'funny' and that they make them feel safe. Parents feel that staff know their children 'well', which gives them 'confidence' whilst their children stay at the service.

Young people and their families are actively involved in service development via consultation through questionnaires, parent's coffee mornings and observation of young people's likes and dislikes. Parents feel their views are taken into consideration and that they can approach staff about any concerns or ideas they have.

The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and strive to improve wherever possible to ensure positive outcomes for young people. Requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on, and in some cases exceeded. New requirements and recommendations concern risk assessments, adding some information to the young person's guide and recording of sanctions or 'time out'.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that any measure of control, discipline or restraint, has a written record in a volume kept for the purpose which includes all relevant information. This is with specific regard to 'Time Out' records. (Regulation 17B (3)(a-i))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within the home are not used unless it is necessary to safeguard children and promote their development. Further ensure such measures are only used where agreed with the responsible authority and, if appropriate, parents (NMS 10.4)
- update the young person's guide to include contact details for the Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and Ofsted. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make excellent progress in many areas of their lives as a result of staying at the service. This is as a result of highly individualised support, which enables them to have improved confidence, self-esteem and a positive understanding of their abilities. Young people are supported to challenge themselves and try new experiences to support greater independence. Promotion of all aspects of health and well-being ensures young people have an understanding of healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Young people's health and physical needs are addressed with close consultation with parents and medical professionals ensuring continuity of care and that individual needs are met.

Attendance at school is excellent and young people are progressing, and achieving in line with their peers. Close working with education staff ensures continuity in social learning, behaviour management and health care whilst using the service.

The careful consideration to groupings of young people, when they stay, supports friendships, including sharing bedrooms, when appropriate. One young person commented it is 'like a sleepover'; whilst a parent felt it gave their child the

'opportunity to do things other children do'. Young people enjoy strong links with the local community through activities such as going to local country parks and being involved in charitable fundraising events. Those who struggle in community settings enjoy a varied range of activities including visiting artists and entertainers. Whilst staying at the service young people are supported to develop a wide range of practical skills for independent living as well as essential self-care skills.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff who are focused on individual needs. Placement plan detail varies depending on the care package of individual young people and how often they access the service. The plans include individual physical and emotional care and communication styles. All include how the young person is to be cared for from arrival to the time they leave. The approach to planning ensures young people benefit from consistent boundaries in a homely, caring environment. Progress, especially for those who access the service frequently, is documented and celebrated, no matter how small. This enables staff to monitor changes over time, which might be unnoticed otherwise. Regular reviews ensure care packages and groupings are still appropriate and used as a tool to update care plans. Careful planning ensures each young person's stay is as positive and rewarding as possible.

All staff have high aspirations and expectations for young people in their care and support educational placements with strong communication between schools and the service. The communication through individual books and regular visits ensures consistency of care and approach, lessening the stresses that transitions can cause.

Medication is stored appropriately and there is a thorough system to ensure safety when receiving medication, administering and disposal. Regular contact with health professionals and parents ensures staff have the most up to date medical information and training for each young person's health and medical requirements. In case of emergency, there are several qualified first aiders on site at all times. The building is spacious with exceptionally well resourced areas for privacy, play or group interaction. The service has a homely feel with safety and accessibility in mind. Young people have a personalised peg and place setting at the dinner table to promote an individualised home from home feel, whilst staff planning ensures the diverse needs of the group are met.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe while using the service and that staff keep them safe. Staff understand young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities and do all they can to protect them from abuse and harm. Staff are confident in processes to follow should they be concerned for a young person's safety or welfare and keep

comprehensive logs where appropriate. Young people do not go missing from care but staff are aware what to do should this happen. Newly implemented risk assessments ensure the use of locks is carefully considered in line with the need to protect freedom for young people whilst keeping them safe. However, the uses of other physically restrictive measures are not assessed and require agreement from parents and the local authority.

Individualised behaviour planning promotes and rewards positive and appropriate behaviour. Sanctions are not used as they are not deemed appropriate to the young people's needs. 'Time out' is used as a diversion or calming tactic and recording of this measure although reflective, does not contain all the elements required for a measure of control or discipline. Positive behaviour is rewarded and young people receive a great deal of praise for their small successes throughout their stays. Due to diversion and reinforcing positive behaviour, restraint is very rarely required.

Young people are protected as far as possible from fire and other hazards as a result of thorough checks and procedures. To reduce the distress from practise evacuations, staff use role-play to practise safe and quick evacuations. The organisation's recruitment policy is thorough and ensures young people are protected from harm by robust personnel checks for staff, volunteers and students completing work experience.

Leadership and management

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

The service meets the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Staff understand the ethos of the service and keep diversity and anti-discriminatory practice central to their work. The young people's guide provides clear information in a friendly and adaptable format, although does not contain contact details for the Independent Reviewing Officer, Children's Rights Director or Ofsted.

The management team effectively runs the service and are always seeking to improve. The manager is aware of where improvements can be made and works to implement changes as necessary. The managers monthly monitoring reflects this and other areas for improvement. The manager seeks the views of young people and their families to consider new ways of improving the service, and parents feel their thoughts are valued and acted upon. The service demonstrates strong multi-agency working to improve outcomes and excellent quality care for young people.

Young people enjoy being cared for by a consistent and enthusiastic staff team who are well trained. The comprehensive training package includes experiential training from adults with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, individualised health care training alongside their mandatory training. Further areas for developments are identified through regular supervision and appraisals. New staff, including volunteers and work experience students benefit from the newly implemented induction package, delivered and assessed by an external tutor. Whilst other more established staff are undertaking apprenticeships in residential childcare. Staff are positive about their

roles and say they 'really enjoy' their work, which is reflected in their longevity of service.

Young people's records are continuing to be monitored for quality and effectiveness and all other requirements and recommendations from previous inspections have been met.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.