

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC018238
Inspection date	17/07/2012
Inspector	Simon Morley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/05/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a privately owned children's home. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for one young person.

The registered provider also runs a school registered with the Department for Education. Places at the school are available to young people living in the home.

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 are looked after by caring and committed staff who support them with a range of challenging, diverse, individual needs. Staff ensure that young people's care is personalised, well planned and provided to a good standard. The day-to-day running of the home is based on young people's needs, their views and wishes. Young people with traumatic backgrounds and numerous previous placements benefit from a stable, homely environment. Stakeholders commented, 'staff provide young people with good support, consistency and stability'.

Young people make substantial progress in improving their behaviour and responding to the support from staff and other professionals. Staff are knowledgeable about young people's needs and are able to cope with challenging behaviour. This provides a foundation for young people to learn, develop and make progress in other areas of their lives.

The management of the home is good. There is a strong focus on providing a high quality of care and helping young people succeed in life. This is underpinned by effective training, supervision and support of staff.

There are two areas for improvement. Management checks undertaken by the registered provider do not have a strong focus on how well young people progress. This compromises the overall quality of monitoring and commitment to continually improving the lives of young people.

Certain parts of the home are in need of maintenance. This has not been addressed in a timely manner, which detracts from the homely environment young people live in. However, these shortfalls are not significantly impacting on the welfare of young people.

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
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home are kept in good structural repair externally and internally, are reasonably decorated and maintained; this applies particularly to the garden fence, lounge ceiling and bathroom. (Regulation 31 (2) (d) & (e))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that visits in accordance with Regulation 33 focus on how well the home supports children to enjoy and achieve. (Statutory Guidance, Volume 5, paragraph 3.12)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people experience adequate outcomes overall in their lives as a result of the staff's determined efforts. Young people have made significant improvements in their behaviour. Anti-social and aggressive behaviour of young people has reduced. As a result, young people's relationships with staff and other professionals involved in their care has improved. Young people now have better opportunities to make improvements in other areas of their lives.

Compared to their starting points at admission, young people are making a fair contribution to their own lives and the running of the home. For example, young people have chosen to work towards targets which are more challenging than the ones set by staff. Young people are making steady progress with these, developing their relationships with staff and making better use of the support offered to them.

This is starting to help young people improve other aspects of their welfare and development; for example, in terms of anger management and emotional resilience.

Young people find employment or are looking for work and exploring their options with further education. Alongside this, young people have started to work on developing additional skills they need to prepare them for adult life. For example, young people are acquiring knowledge and skills with budgeting and managing personal finances.

Young people learn to take responsibility for leading healthy lifestyles. This includes health benefits from physical exercise and healthy eating. Young people do not smoke. They try hard to avoid the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse. A young person commented, 'I get plenty of support and advice about my health'.

Young people are able to continue their important relationships with families and friends. Where these relationships are strained, young people are able to contribute to making improvements.

Quality of care

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

Staff strive hard to develop positive relationships with young people. Staff also want the best for young people and to see them succeed in life. Staff use their commitment, experience and caring skills to provide young people with a friendly, homely environment.

Staff make effective use of their training and de-escalation strategies to help young people improve their behaviour and develop positive relationships. This also helps young people to talk about their views, wishes and feelings sensibly. As a result young people have a good say in what goes on in the home and decisions about their care. Staff help young people to try and make responsible decisions and learn from their mistakes, which gives them opportunities for self-development. For example, staff help young people learn from negative experiences of alcohol use and thereby promote healthier lifestyles.

Care planning and practice includes young people's diverse needs with respect to age, gender, cultural background and identity. Staff are thoughtful in providing care that respects young people's wishes and lifestyle. For example, young people visit their relatives, friends, home town and follow their particular leisure pursuits. In particular, young people can continue with sports clubs they enjoyed before coming to live at the home.

Staff work well with young people's parents, social care and health agencies to try and improve outcomes for young people. For example, outcomes are improved in terms of future education or employment, reducing youth offending and improving healthy lifestyles.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people benefit from living in a safe, homely environment. Over time this helps young people adapt to their surroundings and build relationships with staff.

Staff help young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour and actively challenge inappropriate behaviour. The home has recently introduced a new system of rewards based on young people's views and wishes. This is helping motivate young people to behave much better. As a result young people are able to reduce their offending behaviour and aggression towards others.

Staff avoid the use of institutional sanctions and physical intervention as a means of behaviour management. This helps to add to the homely, friendly environment. Alternative strategies help young people learn better ways to manage conflict. Staff also use police support effectively to help protect young people, promote their welfare and avoid them being unnecessarily criminalised.

Thorough risk management strategies protect young people and also support them to take some reasonable risks as a part of growing up. Young people receive plenty of support to improve their personal safety. This has resulted in a reduction in risk-taking behaviour that places young people in potential danger.

Although young people are sometimes missing from the home, staff are proactive and persistent in taking action to contact or locate them to ensure they are safe. Young people benefit staff commitment to ensure their safety and a safe return to the home. Good care practice minimises the frequency that young people go missing.

There are thorough vetting and selection procedures in recruiting new staff. This ensures that only suitable people are employed to work in the home.

Leadership and management

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

There is strong management of the home which ensures that young people's lives steadily improve. The manager uses thorough systems for monitoring standards of care, policies and procedures. The registered provider is less thorough when it comes to monitoring the progress young people make. Overall though, staff and the manager are able to demonstrate the difference they make to the lives of young people. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. There are plans already in place to build on the strengths and develop areas of weakness in efforts to make the home better for young people.

The Registered Provider ensures that most of the home is well maintained. However, there are some areas in need of improvement that require input from the landlord of the home. So far, the registered provider has not been able to work with the landlord

to achieve this. While this compromises the homely environment in which young people live, so far it has not impacted significantly on their lives.

Staff receive good quality supervision and undertake a wide range of training. This ensures that young people are looked after by a competent staff team able to meet their needs. Effective management and staff support ensures that staff are accomplished in fulfilling their roles and maintaining good standards of care.

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.