

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	18 August 2009
Inspector	Lucy Ansell
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	18 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

This is a specialist home dealing with children who have been severely traumatised or psychologically deprived, with disordered patterns of attachment. This home is part of a children's charity and along with its school provides a programme of care, therapeutic work and education for up to 10 children, aged between five and 13 years of age.

The home is located in a rural setting. It is a large detached Edwardian house with accommodation arranged on three floors, providing a warm, child-friendly environment. There is a large rear garden with a play area, a small vegetable garden and a tarmac area for cycling/rollerblading.

Summary

At this unannounced, full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The management of the home is excellent and there are safe working practices in place ensuring the home functions well and makes the young people feel safe. The therapeutic supervision and management of staff is a strong point of the management team, along with robust behaviour management and good safeguarding measures. Staffing levels are high and young people receive a good standard of care from experienced staff. Individual needs are recognised and excellent plans are in place to address them. The young people feel they are living in a safe environment and have excellent relationships with their care givers. One recommendation has been raised as a result of the inspection, linked to recording of reviewed targets.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with a healthy, balanced diet and are consulted in the planning of the menus. The menu has foods relating to different cultural backgrounds. Fresh fruit is readily available and all meals are home-cooked. Young people commented very positively about the quality of food provided and stated they can always have snacks if they want them. All meals are around a big table in the dining room, and are conducted in a relaxed and friendly manner. Young people's family or involved professionals are also invited to join any meal that is being served.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health and emotional care needs are well met. They access regular health care services to achieve this. Staff support young people to attend these appointments. Specialist input is also provided to meet their specific needs, and all staff work therapeutically and the home employs two psychotherapists. Individual health care plans are established for young people. They also receive advice and support regarding a range of other health care issues to help promote their wellbeing and safety.

Safe systems are established for the receipt, administration and return of unwanted medicines together with the storage of medication. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and guidance is readily available to all staff. Staff undertake in-depth medication training and on duty there will be staff who have a first aid certificate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Systems are in place to enable young people to store personal items securely and the accommodation offers good levels of privacy. Staff are aware of the need for sensitivity when responding to gender issues and personal care arrangements. Confidential information is appropriately stored and shared.

Children are provided with various ways in which to raise complaints or concerns, which are dealt with seriously and promptly. Young people are also made aware of how to contact external agencies; the home has access to an independent visitor who visits frequently.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. There are clear procedures and systems that are in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

An anti-bullying policy is established by the home which is periodically covered during young people's meetings and is also referred to within the Young People's Guide. Policies and procedures are in place and followed if a child becomes absent from the home without consent. Notifications and communications are well recorded and the appropriate authorities are kept informed.

Staff provide a consistent and fair approach to young people's inappropriate behaviour, and the children enjoy positive and appropriate relationships with their care givers. Positive behaviour is reinforced through effective reward systems, and staff show by modelling what is acceptable. Any disciplinary measures used are constructive and helped reinforce the message to the children. Accredited therapeutic training in the management of behaviour is provided to all staff, and children are asked what preferred handling strategy they would like. Staff are excellent at being able to stay with children in crisis and offer them support or give them space away from the group to discuss what is troubling them in a non-judgemental way. Individual incident reports are cross-referenced with bound records. There is a low incidence of restraints and sanctions occurring in the home at the present time and robust monitoring is occurring.

Positive steps are taken to keep young people and staff in the home safe through regular review and update of environmental and fire risk assessments. Fire tests are undertaken and equipment is serviced at regular intervals. Service certificates are kept up to date. Health and safety audits are routinely undertaken.

The home follows sound and robust recruitment and selection procedures. Proof of identity, references and work history checks are undertaken and Criminal Record Bureau checks are obtained before staff commence work and a series of interviews are held to ensure they have selected the appropriate staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The home ensures that the children have the individual support they need. They achieve this through the use of comprehensive placement plans, daily staff and children's meetings, and informative daily staff handovers. Each young person has a key worker matched to them who provides them with individual support and liaises between their families and other professionals. The staff know the children well, have excellent relationships with them and are very knowledgeable about their individual needs and try to work as consistently with each child as possible. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a young person may have.

The education of the young people is actively promoted and appropriate school work is being completed and progress made. The young people mainly attend the home's school or specialist senior schools. The home works hard to ensure good communications between the two disciplines and has achieved a satisfactory rating from the Ofsted education report completed recently.

The young people are encouraged to engage in leisure activities to pursue their individual interests and develop confidence in their skills. Regular activities include trampolining, swimming, bike rides and horse riding. All of the young people access the local community, and are encouraged to join local clubs which would help them pursue a particular interest. The staffing levels are high enough to ensure trips out are made in smaller groups and are suitable to their own needs. The children had just returned from a holiday in the New Forest and they had all had a lovely time, and all were off to the zoo the next day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their needs assessed comprehensively before moving into the home. The home provides individualised care planning to a very high standard with the psychotherapist fully involved. Placement plans detail young people's assessed needs, how these will be met and implemented, and the desired outcomes. Formal reviews are undertaken and key workers provide support both pre- and post-review. Staff review the young people's placement plans and supporting documents every three months, but sooner if required. Staff provide detailed monthly reports to the allocated social worker. The home is not specific in stating they have reviewed targets, and whether they had been achieved by the young people.

Young people are supported to have constructive contact with family and friends. Individual contact arrangements are clearly recorded on the files, and good communications between staff and family ensure contact remains a positive experience. The staff ensure young people are able to have significant relationships with friends outside of the home and this is not affected by them living in a care home.

The home is strong in promoting children's views; seeking their input into the running of the home, and being involved in key decisions that may affect their future. The young people state their views and opinions really matter and say they are effectively listened to by the staff. There are many forums for the children to speak in both formally and informally.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

This is a large detached Edwardian house set back from the road in spacious grounds, in a rural location. The nearest villages are some miles away. Accommodation is arranged over the first two floors with the offices and meeting rooms on the very top floor. There are 10 children's

bedrooms and two staff sleep-in rooms, one on each floor. The smallest lounge is on the middle floor, then a bigger lounge is available on the ground floor. A large playroom and sitting room provide further communal space for additional privacy or meetings. The dining room has a large table to seat all children and staff. There are adequate bathrooms and showers on both floors which have recently been remodelled, and there are sufficient toilets for all staff and young people.

There are two acres of land with play equipment, trampoline and a climbing frame. There is a herb and vegetable garden which the children attend to, a hard play area with a big garden shed for all the bikes, rollerblades and outside play equipment.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose is updated regularly to ensure all information is correct. The children's guide is appropriate for the users of the service. Policies and procedures seen accurately reflect the services that the home is able to offer.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The home actively promotes anti-discriminatory practice. The staff have an awareness and challenge issues of discrimination, racism and inequality. The home ensures through policies, training and team discussions that these issues stay live. They promote through working practice, uniqueness and a value for the individual to respect and promote positive self-image. The young people's care plans fully supports this commitment and provides lots of opportunities for the young people.

This is a well managed home with an experienced staff team and excellent management and leadership. Staff feel well supported and say that teamwork and staff meetings are seen as important and happen regularly. Staff receive formal, structured supervision and appraisals on a regular basis alongside therapeutic training on a weekly basis. Staff have received all relevant annual and specialist training which is a recognised accredited training in therapeutic childcare equivalent to a NVQ Level 3. The home is well staffed with established teams that can provide a balance of relevant experience and competence at all times. The home has recently increased its staffing levels to provide consistency and ensure staffing levels remain strong. The new staff will be enrolled on specialist training as soon as they start in the home. The home provides clear arrangements for management cover outside of normal working hours. The staff at the home are sufficient in number and experience to meet the needs of the young people. The home has a good number of staff at night and a good mix of genders.

The monitoring of the home is taking place consistently and ensures they are continually adapting and moving forward. Young people's case files ensure their needs, development and individuality are recorded in a well ordered, up to date manner.

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 Childrens 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 it can be clearly seen that all targets have been reviewed and it states whether met or not (NMS 3)