

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023636
Inspection date	30 November 2009
Inspector	Lucy Ansell
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	18 August 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 detached Edwardian house with accommodation arranged on three floors, providing a warm, child-friendly environment. There is a rear garden with a play area, a vegetable garden and a tarmac area for cycling/rollerblading.

Summary

This was an interim unannounced inspection focussing on the one previous recommendation and staying safe. At the last inspection the home was judged as outstanding and the rating has not changed during this inspection. The management of the home remains excellent, with 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 an exceptionally good standard of care from experienced staff. Individual needs are recognised and excellent plans are in place to address them. The three recommendations made are to ensure continuing good practice.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was asked to evidence that all targets set for the young people are clearly reviewed and staff write down when they have been met, a new monitoring system has been introduced which now clearly meets this.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The children's privacy is respected by clear policies and procedures concerning personal care which are age appropriate. All information regarding the children is sensitively and confidentially handled, and is kept securely locked away. There are arrangements in place for the children to access a telephone which does not affect their right to privacy. The staff team is comprised of both genders, and at most times of the day there will be either available on shift.

The children are given ample opportunity daily to voice their opinions, including how to complain about any aspect of living in the home. The children have two house meetings a day, which could be used to address any issues of community living, as well as looking at how they are feeling and any personal issues they want to raise. The children also have an independent advocate come in fortnightly, independent visitors, key working sessions and excellent relationships with the senior management team.

Staff receive training annually in safeguarding and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. The senior management team have not had advanced child protection training. There are clear procedures and systems that are in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. A copy of the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures is kept in the home.

Children are protected from bullying by high staffing levels, clear procedures and good risk and behaviour management. The incident of children becoming absent without consent has not arisen in the last year but policy and procedures are in place. The home has a missing person file containing photos and information for each child.

Staff provide a consistent and fair approach to any inappropriate behaviour using clear therapeutic techniques. Positive behaviour is reinforced through effective reward systems and lots of positive praise. The home has comprehensive, well written behaviour plans but it is not clear when they are reviewed. Regular weekly meetings in the management of children's behaviour is provided for all staff by psychotherapists. Staff receive restraint training which focuses on de-escalation before positive handling on an annual basis. Individual incident reports are cross-referenced with bound records however, the couple seen lacked comprehensive recording. Young people understand that boundaries are in place to keep them safe and respect this. There is very low incidences of restraints and sanctions.

Positive steps are taken to keep children 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 company has sound recruitment and selection procedures. Proof of identity, references and work history checks are undertaken. Criminal Record Bureau checks are obtained before staff commence work.

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 not judged.

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 the designated leads for safeguarding are offered advanced child protection training (NMS 16)
- ensure monitoring review forms for behaviour and placement plans are in place (NMS 22)
- ensure incident forms are comprehensive and cross referenced to the log books. (NMS 22)