

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025395
Inspection date	02/08/2011
Inspector	Sonya Robinson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	31/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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.

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.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home cares for children and young people from the ages of birth to 17 years. The home is divided into two houses close by one another.

One house specialises in caring for children with learning disabilities. The other house cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is also a mother and baby unit within this house.

The service is owned by a voluntary organisation.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The home takes positive steps to meet the diverse and complex needs of the young people placed. The home's commitment to ensuring young people receive good care and education effectively promotes young people's personal, social and health education and identity. Staff ensure that young people receive an individualised service, which is designed to meet their personal needs. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people that they are working with, which ensures their needs are consistently met. The home values the rights of the young people and treats them all with respect and dignity.

Young people are very positive about the care that they receive and say they have very good relationships with all staff. They are confident to talk to them and enjoy spending time with them. Young people acknowledge that they have a say in how the home is run, for example, making decisions about the food that they eat, how to decorate their bedrooms and the activities provided.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire were complimentary about the care their child receives and say the home keeps them well informed of their progress. All placing social workers of the current group of children and young people were approached by Ofsted for feedback and the vast majority responded. They consistently said that the outcomes for children and young people who access this service is 'excellent', 'outstanding' or 'very good'.

Staff are proud of young people achievements and they ensure young people's certificates are prominently displayed in their bedrooms or around the home if the young person wishes. Young people receive high levels of praise for their efforts, which significantly enhances their confidence and self-esteem. Young people say they feel safe living at this home.

As a result of this inspection two requirements and three recommendations have been made. These relate to minor omissions in the Statement of Purpose and young person's guide and notifying Ofsted of significant events. Also, ensuring that all staff are familiar with the new protocols around missing from care, young people's views being recorded within behaviour management records and staff training.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
5 (2001)	update and revise the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide (Regulation 5)	30/09/2011
30 (2001)	ensure a system is in place to notify without delay all authorities listed in schedule 5 of significant events. (Regulation 30 (1))	30/09/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when a child's whereabouts are unknown that the home's procedures are compatible with and have regards for the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols. Is maintained and managed by the police or by the local authority for the area where the home is located, and that this protocol is known by all staff (NMS 5.6)
- ensure that where any sanction, disciplinary measure or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that there is a good quality learning and development programme which staff are supported to undertake, such as attending specialist training as identified by a placing authority. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from highly individualised support which helps them grow in confidence. The home acknowledges racial, religious, gender and other differences and actively encourages young people to openly discuss these issues. This means

young people develop positive self-images of themselves and others around them. Young people have strong trusting relationships with staff and as a result they feel valued and respected as individuals.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles. Young people are keen to try different foods and happily go through cookery books searching for new recipes. This has resulted in a significant improvement in young people's attitude to healthy eating.

Young people on pathways plans are making very good progress. They develop budgeting skills as they purchase and prepare their own meals and snacks. Excellent support from staff continually enhances young people's cookery skills and understanding of healthy food options.

Young people are registered with the appropriate health care practitioners. This means they are all receiving good care in relation to their individual health issues. Young people are effectively supported to attend appointments. Young people are able to make well informed choices about their health. This is because they receive excellent guidance and support from staff on a wide range of topics such as sexual health, drug use, alcohol abuse and smoking.

Young people are making very good progress with their education. They attend a variety of schools and their attendance is on the whole excellent. Reports from schools clearly demonstrate that young people are making outstanding progress in relation to their starting points.

Young people benefit from suitable contact with their families. This enables them to sustain positive relationships with those people who are important to them. Staff effectively facilitate contact with families which ensures young people maintain appropriate relationships while maintaining their safety and well-being. Staff are very aware that contact can be stressful for some young people and make sure they are suitable and sensitively supported. They listen to young people and help them to work through their feelings in relation to contact visits. This enables young people to make informed choices about who they wish to see in the future.

Young people are being well-prepared for adult life in accordance with ability and understanding. They achieve this by undertaking more tasks for themselves, such as personal care, doing their own laundry, preparing meals and other household chores. Young people say they feel staff are very supportive and provide good advice regarding budgeting and food preparation. As a result young people feel that they are achieving and have a positive outlook on the future. This is echoed by social worker's who say that young people are doing very well with their independent living skills.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff built upon trust and respect.

Young people say staff are 'helpful', 'kind' and 'caring.' Staffs excellent knowledge of the young people means they are able to consistently meet their individual needs. Staff act as positive role models; they use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviours. They place great emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding their individualised behaviour. These positive relationships with staff mean young people feel safe and secure in their care and know what is expected of them.

Young people are positive about the care they receive and know that staff genuinely care about them. Staff have high aspirations for young people and want them to do well at school. They ensure young people arrive on time and that they have good access to educational materials within the home. The home effectively meets a wide range of young people's potential needs, including healthy lifestyles, education, constructively dealing with problems, relationships and personal care. Young people have every opportunity to talk to staff about their problems and needs. Staff are comfortable discussing sensitive issues, such as sexual health and relationships with young people. Equality and diversity issues are positively addressed both in daily living and care planning. Young people are encouraged and enabled to contribute towards their daily care and to reflect upon their progress with their key worker.

Young people are registered with the appropriate health care professionals and are actively encouraged and supported to attend their appointments. Young people are urged to have appropriate hygiene routines and to take responsibility for their own health. Young people say staff look after them when they are ill and get them the appropriate care. Staff safely manage the arrangements for medication, which ensures young people receive their medication at the right time.

The home has a well developed complaints procedures and any complaints are responded to promptly. Young people say that they feel that the staff listen to what they have to say. Young people are aware that it may not be possible to act upon their wishes and views, but acknowledge that staff always explain the reasons why. Young people's placement plans are individualised to reflect the needs of each young person. Staff effectively implement the plans and ensure reviews take place within the prescribed timescales. Staff work closely with a placing authority in order to update person centred plans and undertake specific individualised training regarding the young people in their care. Young people are always encouraged to take part in their reviews so that their views are heard and taken into account in the decisions made about them. Staff effectively and consistently manage challenging situations. They use effective communication skills to calm situations and enable the young people to consider their actions and behaviour. Staff share information with each other in their 'handovers', so that young people receive a consistent approach by staff.

The houses provide pleasant, warm and homely accommodation. Furnishings and décor are of a good standard. Young people say that they have everything that they need and enjoy the opportunities to personalise their bedrooms. Young people's personal achievements and photographs of outings and activities can also be found around the houses. Young people undertook a variety of activities during the course

of the inspection. These include singing, colouring, jigsaws, computer games; along with outdoor activities, including out to the park, bike riding, trampoline, visit to an indoor snow and ski centre and meals out in restaurants and picnic's. The rear gardens are well maintained and are used by young people for fun and relaxation. Young people have a strong sense of belonging and social worker's spoken to during the course of this inspection felt that the quality of care was 'good', 'excellent' and/or 'consistent'.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people live in a safe environment where they are effectively protected from harm and have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Young people said that they felt safe living at the home and that bullying is not an issue. This is something that staff remain vigilant about and zero tolerance is applied. Young people spoken to said that if they had any concerns that would always speak to staff.

The home actively takes steps to make sure that young people missing from home are protected. If young people go missing, staff will try to keep in touch by mobile telephone to encourage them to return by taxi and ensure they are safe. Staff are aware and do not exceed the measures they can take to prevent a child leaving without permission under current legislation and government guidance. The home has begun to develop agreed local protocols regarding young people missing from care, although not all staff are aware of this. Young people are greeted positively on their return and are given refreshments and monitored appropriately. Risk assessments are in place detailing individual needs and agreed strategies to support and protect young people. Staff have a good understanding about child protection policies and procedures along with access to regular ongoing training. This ensures that staff have up to date knowledge on how to safeguard children and young people.

There are good monitoring systems in place whereby the management team look at behaviour management to ensure that appropriate action has been taken, that is that it is fair and reasonable. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. Staff assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems. Young people are aware of what is expected of them. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and is not common place within this service. Recording systems for sanctions show that staff are reasonable in their approach when applying consequences. However, young people's views are not consistently noted within these records. This is important as it encourages the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

Young people live in a homely environment that is physically safe. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the premises including certification for gas, electricity and fire safety checks. This is supported by risk assessments for the home and young people. Recruitment and selection processes are robust. As a result young

people are cared for by staff who are experienced, suitably vetted and who have the best interests of young people at the heart of everything that they do. Visitors are required to sign in and out of the premises and are supervised by staff during their visit. This means young people are protected from potential harm.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed in their best interests. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and young people, their families and social workers are clear about the services and support provided. However, both the Statement of Purpose and the young person's guide have minor omissions as a result of new statutory guidance and legislation.

Young people enjoy outstanding outcomes because of the commitment of the Registered Manager and her staff team. The Registered Manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering good quality care to all young people. The Registered Manager has identified strengths and some areas for development for the service. This involves working closely with one placing authority in looking at staff training for a specific group of young people regarding their individual needs.

On the last inspection undertaken in January 2010 one recommendation was made which was to keep records of meals served to young people. This has been completed and maintained. The monitoring of care quality is effective. An external person visits the home once a month and evaluates and reports on the quality of care. They assess all the relevant issues and talk to young people, parents, relatives and the staff. They write a comprehensive report and the Registered Manager ensures recommendations are followed up. The Registered Manager also formally monitors the quality of care every month.

Care staff within the home have appropriate childcare qualifications, also all staff receive regular one-to-one supervision from a senior member of staff. This provides important extra support for staff to discuss specific issues.

Young people's records are organised and contain up to date information about them, including relevant documents from placing authorities. There are also systems in place to notify relevant authorities of any significant issues that may occur within the home or with regards to the young people placed. There have been three incidents since the last inspection; of these two have not been forwarded to Ofsted in line with the regulations. However, all other parties were informed and appropriate action was taken to ensure the young person's safety. This has not impacted on the well-being of young people placed.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

