

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	16 December 2008
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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

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.

The first is a large Victorian detached house set in substantial grounds and provides accommodation over two floors. The house is split into three groups and includes a mother and baby unit. The house has plenty of space for young people to access including shared and private space.

The second property is a modern detached property, and also provides accommodation over two floors. The house is well equipped and furnished to meet the needs of those living there.

Both houses are situated in a residential area within a village, close to leisure facilities, local amenities and transport links.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a good service overall with some outstanding features.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff, they are afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach outstanding outcomes from education. However, there are issues around health and safety such as clutter on the upstairs landing, safety checks being completed and the possible restriction on movement within the home for some young people. Also documentation for young people leaving care is not always consistent.

Staff benefit from a good level of training and support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas such as emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is good.

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 previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy and varied meals which meet their dietary needs. Staff understand what makes a healthy and balanced diet and encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits. Young people are encouraged to plan and choose what they have to eat, go shopping for food and cook meals where appropriate.

Young people have plans showing their health needs and the arrangements for meeting them. Staff monitor young people to make sure they are healthy by encouraging them to attend routine health checks and by ensuring they get medical treatment when they are unwell. The home has good links with specialist health and advisory services, to make sure that young

people get suitable support. Staff deal with health issues sensitively and make sure young people get appropriate support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles.

The home manages young people's medication safely. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. Medication is securely stored in a suitable cupboard. Staff keep detailed records of any medicines stored in the home and the administration of medicines to young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people make and receive telephone calls in private and are given space and time to be alone when they wish.

The home makes sure that young people have access to information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy.

Staff fully understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. They are trained in safeguarding young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. They provide a good level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. Also, they give young people good advice about personal safety. Bullying is not a specific issue for young people.

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 find them and keep in touch by mobile telephone to encourage them to return 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.

Staff use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Records relating to sanctions show that they are fair and reasonable. The home places great emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's behaviour. 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. They also reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. In addition, staff carry out regular health and safety checks including fire safety systems to make sure that the home is a safe place to live. However, gas safety checks are yet to be fully completed, though the service has plans to address this.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff support and positively encourage young people to take part in wide range of leisure activities. They have multiple opportunities to develop confidence in their skills, enjoy their leisure time and try new things. Staff are very good at encouraging young people to take part in activities and try new experiences.

Education is actively promoted and plays an extremely important part in the lives of young people. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are very clear arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff see education as very important, supporting and encouraging young people to learn and study. Young people have access to books and educational materials to aid their learning.

Young people enjoy learning and are making outstanding progress. The home is very good at working with schools to support young people's learning and address problems affecting their education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have written placement plans identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and keep detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's placement plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Young people attend review meetings and feel that they are listened to and their views about their lives taken into account.

Young people see their families regularly to help them maintain relationships. Staff make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's welfare.

Young people move into the home in a sensitive way. Staff are good at helping young people settle in making sure they know what is expected of them, what to do if they are worried, and their way around the local area. The home is good at gathering sufficient information about young people before they move in to ensure that the home is able to meet their needs and assess their compatibility with other young people.

Young people are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time, and the house rules. Staff and the provider actively seek young people's views about how well they feel they are looked after.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. Staff are helpful and enjoy spending time with young people. They have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people consistent with good child care and place great emphasis on being good role models.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff support young people to prepare for adult life by encouraging them to take more responsibility for themselves suitable to their age and understanding. Young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals,

cooking, using money and household tasks. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills. However, not all young people have an appropriate leaving care plan.

Young people live in homely and comfortable accommodation. The home is decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs. However, the home uses key pad locks on the exit doors. This prevents some young people from moving freely within the house. Although a risk assessment is in place, for restricting movements within the home and individual risk assessments highlight young people with no awareness of danger who may run off, they do not state how the liberty and rights of young people is promoted, in line with their individual and specific needs.

The home also has a number of household items on the landing areas which are possible health and safety or trip hazards. This means that young people's needs are not being actively promoted within this area.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's rights are respected and are actively promoted. The service demonstrates that the individual care needs of young people are identified and that direct work with young people is undertaken. Their care needs are routinely monitored through robust systems. This ensures that the individual care needs of young people are met.

The statement of purpose of the home accurately reflects the service provided in the home. The manager regularly reviews the content, to make sure that it is up to date and provides parents and professionals with a clear description of the home and information about those working there. Young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The children's guide provides important information about the home in a way that is easily understood by young people. Also, the home has a clear written statement for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Staff employed at the home are motivated and have access to a wide range of training courses, that demonstrates a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of young people, this includes specific training around disabilities, safeguarding and support.

Staffing arrangements within the home significantly enhance the positive experiences of young people. The home is staffed to meet the individual needs of those staying at any one time. This is achieved by risk assessments and placement planning, which clearly assesses the support needs of each individual and incorporates this into the home's staffing levels.

Monthly monitoring visits are undertaken and reports contribute to the manager's evaluation of the service. Records show that young people and their parents are spoken with and their opinions are sought, in relation to their experiences of the home. Good systems are in place, to measure the home's performance and monitor their progress in delivering a good service. Records show that information gathered is utilised to inform practice, in areas such as effective communication, consultation and day to day management arrangements.

Young people have accessible care records, that are clear and reflect the standard of care and support delivered to each young person. Systems within the home ensure that all records are well maintained and regularly monitored and reviewed.

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 all unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children are identified and where possible eliminated, for example gas safety checks being completed (NMS 26)
- provide a plan for each young person preparing to leave care, which specifies the support and assistance they need to make the transition into adulthood (NMS 6)
- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within the home, for example key pad locks on doors, are only used in relation to individual children to promote and safeguard their welfare. Physical restrictions must not impact on all children staying at the home (NMS 23.5)
- ensure all unnecessary risks to the health or safety of children are identified and where possible eliminated, for example removing clutter from the upstairs landing areas (NMS 26).