

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025657
Inspection date	28 June 2010
Inspector	Cheryl Carter
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	17 February 2010
--------------------------------	------------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 children's home provides respite care as well as medium to long-term care for children aged seven years to under 18 years.

The home provides medium to long-term residential care for up to three younger children and sibling groups and for a further three children aged between seven and 17 years on admission, who may have emotional, behavioural or learning disabilities.

The home aims to work positively with the child's family and external professionals, such as placing authorities, schools or health services.

The home is one of a modern terrace on a residential estate; there is access to community and leisure facilities within the area and there are good transport links.

Summary

At this unannounced key inspection all key standards were inspected. The outstanding actions made at the previous inspection were also followed up. Not all the actions and recommendations from the last inspection have been completed and are therefore reinstated.

Children are generally well looked after by a committed staff team who make the safety, interests and well-being of the young people a priority. Young people's placement plans reflect accurately how individual needs will be met. Staff are good at seeing young people as individuals and providing them with the right support and services to meet their personal needs.

Staff confirmed that they feel supported by the manager and the team works well and this was observed throughout the inspection visit. Staff receive regular monthly supervision however, no appraisals for the past year have been undertaken and staff do not have personal development plans on file. The quality of regulation 33 visits are poor and do not reflect how the home is functioning and does not pick up on any maintenance issues.

Although the home has a young person's handbook in place, this still needs to be produced in a format that reflects the age and understanding of the young people in the home.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, two actions were made, asking the registered persons to ensure sanctions are not excessive, that the young people's guide is produced in a form appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the young people accommodated in the home. There have been no sanctions imposed since the last inspection. There were also three recommendations made. One of these recommendations that related to safety checks have been completed. Safety checks are being carried out at regular intervals.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary requirements. They have opportunities to plan and prepare meals with some assistance. The record of menus shows that young people are provided with suitable and varied diet. None of the young people with permanent placements have any special dietary needs. However staff are very aware that some of the young people who attend for respite may have different dietary needs and staff plan for and include their needs in the menu when they are attending for respite care.

The physical, emotional and health needs of each young person are identified and appropriate action is taken to meet them. All young people are registered with a local General Practitioner. Young people are provided with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their needs. A written record is kept of all significant illnesses, accidents by or injuries to young people during their placement at the home. Young people are given opportunities to discuss issues openly and honestly with staff such as sex, relationships and smoking. Young people receive additional support through other professionals in line with their health care plans.

Staff have received medication training in the past year; however no medication training is planned for at least another two years. The manager however will look at some in-house training for staff to update them on the safe handling and storage of medication. Staff spoken to confirmed that they had undertaken training in the past year. The medication policy now covers all aspects of the administration and recording of medication and the storage and disposal of medication. Records of accidents and incidents are kept. Most of the staff team has completed training in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They have single occupancy bedrooms. The living arrangements provide space where they can relax and find privacy away from others if they wish. Bathing and toilet facilities meet the needs of the young people placed and all have appropriate locks for their privacy. Staff know how to deal with and share information which they are given in confidence for child protection purposes. Staff are sensitive to issues when dealing with young people of the opposite sex.

There are clear procedures for handling complaints. Young people's rights are maintained, upheld and appropriate information is available for young people to access at their own leisure. Information about how to complain is included in the young people's handbook, however there is no information relating to Ofsted and how young people can contact Ofsted directly. Young people said that they will talk to the manager or a worker if they had a complaint.

Staff are familiar with the home's own safeguarding procedures. Most staff have received some basic child protection training. This training is not updated annually to ensure that staff remain aware of changes to ensure that child protection procedures are effective, and work consistently and the safety and rights of both staff and young people are protected. The established culture of the home ensures that bullying is understood by young people to be unacceptable.

Children are very well supervised in this home and there are no incidents of young people staying away from the home without authorisation. There is however procedures for staff to follow if a young person go missing from the home. All notifications of significant events relating to the young people are reported to the appropriate bodies within the specified time.

Health and safety issues are addressed with a range of risk assessments in place including specific young people's own risks. They identify hazards in and around the home as well as risk assessments when taking young people on community based trips and activities. Appropriate service contracts are in place for fire equipment and servicing gas boilers and cookers. Portable appliance testing is carried out annually however no electric records were seen. Smoke alarm are tested fortnightly and fire equipment checked monthly. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals; however no fire drills have taken place since the last admission to the home.

Records show that the staff recently employed have had all of their recruitment checks undertaken prior to starting their employment. Records such as Criminal Records Bureau checks and references were received prior to them taking up their employment. The files however did not have job descriptions, health questionnaires or letters offering the job.

All visitors to the home are asked to sign in the visitor's book, with the purpose of their visit, the time of arrival and departure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are supported appropriately by the staff team to meet their cultural and identity needs. Young people receive individualised support from staff members when they need it. All children have a key worker that ensures their individual needs are addressed. Risks to young people are identified and recorded to ensure that staff have the information they need to help young people develop independence and keep safe.

The education of young people is actively promoted and attendance at school is taken very serious. All young people currently placed at the home attend school in line with their personal education plans. Staff support the education of these young people and attend education meetings in the absence of their parents. For those young people placed at the home for respite care the responsibility for their education remain with their parents, however the staff attend their annual education review at their school. Young people are able to pursue their interests and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people have their needs assessed prior to moving into the home. Placement plans detail the needs of the young person and how these needs will be met. There is clear evidence that reviews are undertaken regularly in the light of individuals' care and progress at the home. There is clear evidence of all contact arrangements and who plays a significant role in their lives.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. The home holds monthly house meetings and key work sessions for the young people are fortnightly, this is in line with their assessed needs and abilities. The home works hard to ensure they help build and maintain appropriate relationships with proactive and partnership working.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive care that helps them prepare for adulthood in line with their placement plans. There are no pathway plans, however, staff and young people say that they are learning skills that will help to prepare them to move on to appropriate accommodation. Young people are encouraged to engage in skills for independence such as laundry, cooking, shopping and keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy.

Young people receive appropriate allowance weekly and accounts are maintained of this. Although young people have access to the unit's telephone, they are unable to access a telephone independently of the staff. Young people receive pocket money, clothing allowances and toiletries. There is no allowance given to young people to top up their mobile phones.

The home provides suitable accommodation for the young people and was found to be clean and tidy however, parts of the home looked tired and in need of redecoration.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide has been updated to ensure all information is current. Some of the policies and procedures seen have also been updated and accurately reflect the services that the home is able to offer. The young people's guide does not reflect the age and understanding of the young people placed in the home.

Staff meetings are seen as important and happen regularly, however the minutes of the meetings seen only address issues relating to the children as well as reviewing current strategies pertaining to the young people's care. Issues relating to the running of the home and how the staff are feeling, training, annual leave are not addressed in team meetings, so it is difficult to get a feel of the staff morale within the home. All staff receive regular individual supervision.

The home has an established core team of committed staff that provide a warm and caring environment for the young people. The staff group meets the needs of the children; however they lack a level of training to develop their skills to keep them motivated. The home has a predominately female staff team. The responsible individual often covers a shift and this is the only male input into the home currently. The lines of accountability in the absence of the manager are unclear. There is no training programme in place for the staff. The home does not have a business plan for the next year that takes on board training for staff.

The manager of the home holds a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 (NVQ) and is currently working towards the NVQ at level 4. Three other members of staff hold NVQ at level 3 in caring for children while two other staff members are currently undertaking NVQ at level 3 in Health and Social Care.

The responsible individual consistently monitors the running of the home every month. These reports are sent to Ofsted. However, the reports do not show suitable review of the quality of care, including detailed comments from young people or provide evidence of how quality should be developed further. The Registered Manager has a system in place to monitor the home against the Statement of Purpose to improve the quality of care provided in the home. Young people's records contain up-to-date information about them, including the relevant documents from placing authorities. The quality of health plans is good; the records contain sufficient information to show how young people's health needs should be supported on a daily basis.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports the home actively promotes anti-discriminatory practice and staff awareness of issues of discrimination. Staff promote through working practice that each young person is unique and a valued individual with the right to respect and positive self image.

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
22	ensure that consequences of young people's unacceptable behaviour are clear to staff and any measures applied are relevant to the incident, and carried out as contemporaneously as possible. Also records of all sanctions must be recorded and reviewed regularly (Regulation 17)	28 July 2010
1	ensure that the children's guide is produced in a form appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the children accommodated in the home (Regulation 4.4)	28 July 2010
24	ensure that all parts of the of the children's home used by the children are kept clean, reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31(2) (e))	28 July 2010
29	ensure that all staff members receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal (Regulation 27(4) (a))	28 July 2010
34	ensure that the home will be financially viable for the purpose of achieving the aims and objectives set out in the Statement of Purpose. (Regulation 36.1)	28 July 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all childcare staff have personal development plan (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that the regulation 33 visits are conducted according to regulations and the reports are a reflection of how the home is functioning (NMS 32)
- ensure there are clear lines of accountability in the home in the absence of the manager. (NMS 34)