

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	12 May 2009
Inspector	Helen Humphreys
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	13 January 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 home is a three bedroom, semi-detached house with gardens at the front and rear. There is a lounge, kitchen, dining room and three upstairs bedrooms and a bathroom with separate toilet. The home is situated on a main road and there are nearby links to public transport. The purpose of the home is to offer long-term care for two young people.

Summary

This was an unannounced key inspection carried out over one day and included an inspection of all the key national minimum standards (NMS). The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

This home is providing a good standard of care to the young people who live there and outcomes at present are positive. The young people are attending full time school, enjoy activities in the community, good health and are generally well behaved. The young people are generally satisfied with the care provided, one wrote, 'There is nothing you could do to make this home better, I love it here'. However, some issues were raised during the inspection by young people which were mainly addressed through a joint discussion with staff. The staff agreed to take some immediate action to address these matters. In addition the home does not have up to date procedures from the local safeguarding unit, the staff would like further training on equality and diversity and the staffing rota should be amended to ensure that young people's activities are not cut short to meet staffing needs.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager and staff continue to provide a good standard of care to the young people placed. No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The young people eat a varied, nutritious and healthy diet and they are satisfied with the arrangements. The young people get the opportunity to choose and select menus, shop and prepare food. The staff have undertaken food hygiene training and follow good procedures. The staff and young people eat together and the dining arrangements are appropriate. The young people are developing good skills in preparing food, enjoy cooking and can follow a recipe.

The staff promote well the health and well being of the young people. The health care plans are very detailed and set out clearly what the needs of the young people are and how these are going to be met by the staff. The staff are working in conjunction with other agencies and health care professionals to provide a broader range of services for the young people. The young people are encouraged to engage in a range of activities to develop fitness, including dancing and roller skating.

The arrangements for the storage and administration of prescribed and non prescribed medication are good. The records held are accurate and effective stock control systems are in place. All staff have undertaken first aid training and well stocked first aid boxes are available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff respect the privacy of the young people. They young people have keys to their bedrooms but generally choose not to use them. Confidential information is stored securely and staff are aware of not sharing information inappropriately. The young people have access to a telephone that they can use in private and are provided with money to do so.

The young people are provided with a range of information in the children's guide and on a notice board so that they can make a complaint should they wish to. The complaint's officer for the organisation visits the home throughout the year. The young people are currently involved in some participation work which is being developed in conjunction with other homes within the organisation, which is a forum where young people can raise concerns. However, one young person has recently lost confidence in the staff's ability to listen and take action with their concerns, although this was partially restored during the inspection process. The staff agreed to take some corrective action.

The young people are kept safe at the home through the action of the staff and the policies and procedures in place. Young people feel safe at the home and agree that staff give them strategies to keep themselves safe in the community. The staff have received training and an up to date version of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' is in place, but the local safeguarding procedures are out of date. There have been no child protection incidents at the home since the last inspection.

The young people are protected from bullying. Any incidents are dealt with appropriately and recorded and monitored by the manager. The young people are confident in the staff's ability to deal with any matters.

The young people have not been reported missing from the home for over 12 months. Appropriate policies are in place and young people are encouraged to stay in touch with the staff when away from the home.

The staff encourage socially acceptable behaviour and the young people are generally well behaved and their behaviour gives no cause for concern currently. The staff have been trained in the use of behaviour management techniques and appropriate plans are in place. The staff use a range of measures, including sanctions which are appropriate and positive encouragement. Young people are rewarded for receiving a pre-determined number of 'positives' which had, in at least one circumstance not been awarded, which was leading to some dissatisfaction with young people. The staff agreed to explore and amend this situation.

The young people live in a home which provides good physical safety. The arrangements for fire safety are good and the home is subject to regular testing on a range of matters, including asbestosis which was undertaken during the inspection. The individual risk assessments on the young people are clear and set out good risk management strategies for the staff to follow and includes monitoring and review arrangements.

The arrangements for the recruitment and selection of staff are very good and a thorough process is undertaken, including following up references and 'gaps' in employment history. The staff personnel files are kept in good order and meet the Regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff understand the needs of the young people and are seeking to meet these. The care plans set out clearly what these are and the staff are working with other agencies to support them. The young people have key workers and key working sessions are planned, have clear purpose and are evaluated. The care plans set out any needs arising from the culture, faith, disability and so on of the young people and how they will encourage community involvement.

The staff promote and support the education of the young people very well. All of the young people attend school full time and are making good progress. Clear education plans are in place and the staff advocate for the young people by attending meetings and support school staff. Staff say that they 'support young people with education so that they enjoy learning'.

The young people have access to a range of activities both within the home and in the community. In particular the young people are encouraged to take part in active activities, for example dancing, roller skating and regular attendance at the gym. One young person has gained part-time employment arising out of his hobby, which is really good practice. However, this is marred by his work being cut short some times due to staff being unable to collect him at the right time as there are insufficient staff on duty. This is not appropriate and staff agreed to look at this matter.

The young people go on separate holidays which are selected to meet their needs, which they clearly enjoy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The arrangements for care planning are very good. The plans set out clearly the assessed needs of the young people and how these are to be met and what staff are required to do. The format follows the Every Child Matters outcomes and are regularly monitored and reviewed. The young people are making good progress at the home and the long term plans for at least one are known and appropriate. The arrangements for review and attendance at statutory reviews are good and young people attend their meetings and are able to contribute.

The staff support and promote contact and will provide transport and finance for meals out. The young people are aware of their contact details and these are recorded on file, including what staff will do to encourage contact. However, the contact arrangements for one young person is limited and staff have discussed encouraging the local authority to appoint an independent visitor so that they can contact someone outside of the home directly.

The young people have opportunities to make decisions about their day to day lives, the running of the home and are members of the Youth Forum to discuss matters about the organisation. The staff and young people meet together regularly and share a range of matters.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The staff promote and support the development of independent living skills. One young person said, 'I get a lot of support and help from staff, we cook our own tea one night a week, tidy own rooms, do own washing, wash own pots'. The young people are developing a range of skills and are encouraged to save and open a bank account. This work is supported through well developed plans which are regularly monitored.

The young people live in a house which provides adequate communal and personal space. The home is situated in a community and is not distinguishable from other properties as being a children's home. The young people like their bedrooms, which they have personalised to their own tastes and have chosen their beds, bedding and decoration. The home is clean, well maintained, furnished and decorated. There are no outstanding maintenance matters.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff have undertaken training, although the staff have identified that they would like to develop this further to understand the impact of this work on the young people they care for. The manager has developed an action plan to promote equality and diversity in the home and this is to be shared with the staff and work is due to commence. The staff have a good understanding of the pertinent issues and the specific needs of the young people are identified in the placement plans. The staff have joined with some of the other homes in the organisation in an activity called 'Around the world in 80 dishes'. The staff and young people visit other homes on specific days to share food and activities from a different country. Staff and young people were enjoying the experience and challenge.

Young people, professionals and families have access to appropriate information about the service. The statement of purpose is up to date and has accurate information. The children's guide is a small colourful document which contains useful and helpful information for the young people including a range of people they can contact should they wish to.

The home employs a sufficient number of competent experienced staff to meet the needs of the young people. The majority of staff have National Vocational Qualification at level 3 (NVQ) and have undertaken mandatory training on a range of subjects. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals to support them in their work and identify further training and developmental opportunities. The young people and staff have good relationships and young people speak positively about the staff and the things they do for them.

However, on occasion only one staff is employed at night so when one young person needs collecting from work or other activities they have to be collected earlier than the shift finishes in order to meet staffing needs rather than child care needs.

The arrangements for the internal and external monitoring of the home are good and contribute to the overall improvement of the provision of care at the home. The Regulation 33 visitor is known to the young people and the reports are helpful to the staff with positive and recommendations for improvement included. The manager creates a monthly report from information collated from a range of sources and contains information on any action taken to improve or follow up matters.

The young people's files contain the range of documents the staff require in order to care for the young people and are securely stored. Young people have access to their records should they wish to read them.

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 that up to date safeguarding procedures from the local office are in place (NMS 17.2)
- continue to advocate with the placing authority for one young person to be appointed an Independent Visitor (NMS 7.8)
- provide training for the staff on meeting the practical needs of the young people arising from their disability, faith, culture and the impact of being looked after children (NMS 31.5)
- ensure that staff are deployed in a way which does not impact on the young people's ability to maintain employment or activities (NMS 30.4)