

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC028460
Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Valerie Lorraine Campbell
Date of last inspection	12/02/2014

Inspection date	15/12/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	adequate
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Overall the service performs well in meeting the identified needs of the young people in the home. Staff provide individualised care and young people feel staff care about their well-being. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives and staff are keen for them to make good progress. The quality of the relationship between staff and young people is good. Staff enjoy working with young people and helping them meet placement objectives. Young people live healthy lifestyles and have access to good recreational opportunities. Young people's educational needs are variable, dependant on their willingness to engage with educational resources. Consultation with young people is effective.

The behaviour of some young people is a cause for concern. The number of critical incidents in recent months has been high. The service however has managed incidents appropriately in an effort to reduce unacceptable and risky behaviour. Managers have developed an effective partnership with a number of professionals to explore and resolve young people's challenging behaviour.

The leadership and management of the home are good. This inspection notes there have been significant improvements to the management of the service since the home's last full inspection. The staff group are caring, skilled and experienced and have access to good support and training opportunities. Managers demonstrate a

keen commitment to service development and improvement in outcomes for young people.

Some shortfalls are noted. The children's guide and recording tools for the use of restraint requires revision; staff must contact the LADO promptly following a serious complaint against staff members and staff who do not hold necessary NVQ qualification must enrol to complete this training.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is privately owned. It is a family business and a majority of the staff are family members. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children and young people who have emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
10/10/2013	Full	adequate
09/01/2013	Interim	good progress
30/08/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Statutory 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)	keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the children's guide (Regulation 5(a))	02/02/2015
27 (2001)	ensure that all person's employed receive appropriate training. In particular NVQ training at level 3. (Regulation 27(4)(a))	01/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that allegations against people that work with children are reported to the LADO at the earliest opportunity (NMS 20.5)
- ensure that staff understand the nature of records maintained. In particular, that the home's recording log of restraints is in compliance with Regulation 17B. (NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The home provides young people with a stable, caring environment; the majority of young people in placement have lived there for a significant length of time. Young people describe their experiences of the home as being positive and most experience individual growth since placement start. Their relationship with the staff group is good. One young person comments, 'The staff are good and it's a good house. My key worker is nice - we get along, understand each other. We have jokes, she helps me, she cares about me'.

The home has very little placement breakdown; most placements are well sustained despite significant challenges. Young people receive individual and personalised care and the quality of care is good. Young people's identity needs are well met and issues pertaining to young people's self-confidence are explored regularly throughout the duration of the placement. The home's placement and care planning processes are consistent and young people are aware of placement objectives and plans for their future.

Young people live healthy lifestyles. They are promptly registered with primary care services soon after their placement starts and files contain clear health care and medical information. Staff monitor well any presenting matters, such as sexual health issues. Young people enjoy nutritious and balanced meals that are to their liking and that meet cultural and religious obligations. They have access to relevant mental health services to assist in developing good emotional resilience and coping mechanisms. Staff share an effective working relationship with external mental health services and a number of young people are linked into CAMHS. Other young people choose to access mental health support services from local resources. The focus of some of this work has been in exploring relationship difficulties and anger management. The organisation has recruited an experienced consultant who offers psychological input to staff. For example in assisting to devise effective risk assessments and behaviour management plans. This is a valuable resource to assist young people explore and develop emotional resilience.

Young people's educational outcomes are variable. This is largely dependent upon young people's willingness to engage with identified learning provision. Some young people are making good educational progress, while others refuse to engage, and so their educational progress remains poor. Staff proactively monitor and encourage young people to identify for themselves appropriate courses or learning resources in an effort to promote their educational achievement. Staff regularly explore with young people their learning objectives in key work, 1:1 sessions and statutory reviews.

Young people have access to a range of leisure activities that are of their choosing.

Typical activities include trips to the cinema, board games, attendance at youth clubs and the gym. This summer all young people attended a week's holiday accompanied by staff which they enjoyed. Young people are at the centre of decision-making with regards to recreational activities and key aspect of the running of the home. Young people enjoy good opportunities to share their views and opinions. For example they attend weekly residents' meetings at which they fully participate. They also make use of other forums such as key work sessions and Looked After Children (LAC) reviews to share their views about their placement and the home's services in general. Young people had significant input into the home's recent re-decoration programme and, for example, have decided not to put up Christmas decoration this year. They also regularly have influence on meal planning and activity choice. Young people feel listened to and believe their opinions matter to staff.

Young people's family members and friends are made welcome at the home and staff make good efforts to support contact. Young people benefit from the home's flexible approach toward visits at the home. They encourage young people to develop and build upon existing positive relationships and discourage relationships that are not in the best interests of young people. There are clear boundaries in place about having visitors and these are well known to young people. Case files contain comprehensive information about agreed contact arrangements. Where individuals are prohibited from contact with young people, this is highlighted so young people are kept safe.

Older young people develop self-care skills through participation with the home's life skills programme. Tasks include young people getting involved in meal preparation, shopping, and money management as well as managing their own laundry and keeping their bedrooms tidy. Young people's abilities in these areas are monitored and staff offer support and supervision to assist skills development and preparation for adulthood and independent living.

Quality of care

good

Staff are caring and offer quality, individualised care to young people; they work effectively to meet identified needs. The staff group enjoy and share positive and constructive relationships with each other and young people. The quality of care is good. One staff member comments, 'I'm so attached to X, I can't believe he' will be leaving soon! What do I like the most about my job? I love the feedback from young people after they have left indicating they are doing well. It means our impact has been good'.

Young people have good opportunities to share their views and feelings about the service in general and specific placement issues. They feel that staff are interested in their opinions and take what they say seriously. Young people understand, and are very aware of, the home's complaints procedures. They have good access to clear written information about making complaints and the home's procedures are routinely stated at the end of each key work sessions. They are advised to contact

Ofsted directly if they are dissatisfied with the home's services and young people do. Since the last inspection there have been three recorded complaints; staff managed these appropriately and in accordance with the organisation's complaints procedures.

The home's placement and care planning processes are consistent. Staff and young people benefit from clear written guidance with regard to these processes. Young people are cared for in line with individual placement plans and receive personalised care. Staff pursue comprehensive information from social workers in order to ensure that placements offer services that meet effectively the needs of each young person. Staff ensure that placement planning meeting are consistently convened. This is important to establish and agree with all parties the placement goals and objectives from the outset of placement negotiations.

Representatives of the local authorities are positive about the quality of the home's services. A Local authority social worker comments, 'X has had numerous placements breakdown. This is the most stable placement she has been in. Education is well promoted here, and this is very important to X now; she's able to focus on the positives'. Other involved professionals are equally satisfied with progress being made by young people. Documented care plans are appropriately detailed and highlight individual needs and how the service is to meet these needs. Staff devise detailed risk assessments and young people's individual behavioural management plans. These highlight behavioural issues and outline strategies in place to counteract unacceptable behaviour. Staff regularly liaise with a range of professionals and convene professionals and disruption meetings where placements are jeopardised by on-going placement difficulties.

Staff pay good attention to the identity needs of young people. These are highlighted in placement plans and staff routinely explore relevant issues in key work sessions. The service embraces and promotes differences and has sensitively addressed young people's needs in relation to culture, sexuality religion and gender. For example staff sensitively explore with young people issues of sexuality and assist in identifying safe and appropriate local resources.

The home's building provides young people with welcoming, homely accommodation. The premises are well maintained and have recently undergone a programme of re-decoration. Young people were fully involved in this process, choosing the décor and furnishings for communal areas and their private rooms. Young people are happy with their surroundings.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Staff work hard to promote the safety of young people, and residents say they feel safe while in placement. Staff relationships with young people are positive and young people have access to useful information about independent bodies available to advocate on their behalf.

Young people indicate that bullying is not an issue for the home. In recent months however, the relationship between some young people has been tense, resulting in a high number of undesired incidents. Staff are working industriously with the relevant local authorities, mental health professionals, the police and others to resolve on-going relationship difficulties amongst some of the young people. Staff devise behavioural management plans in conjunction with the home's consultant and CAMHS workers in an effort to manage conflict and challenging behaviour making use of a more therapeutic approach. A good illustration of this is young people are provided with personal diaries for them to log their feelings and emotions to assist with self-reflection.

Staff receive regular training in child protection and the home has clear policies and procedures in place to support staff's practices. This helps keep young people safe from abuse and harm. Managers ensure that general safeguarding issues are frequently explored in team meetings. This is to promote staff's awareness of safeguarding protocols and action to be taken in the event of incidents or allegations of a child protection nature. Since the last inspection there have been two allegations made against a member of staff. Both incidents were managed effectively. However, staff must ensure that the Local Authority Designated Officer is informed of any allegation at the earliest opportunity in line with child protection procedures. This was found not to be the case in one of the incidents.

Staff receive training in conflict resolution and physical intervention. Since the last inspection, staff have not used physical intervention with any young person. The home's recording log of restraints however requires revision. This is to ensure the service has a full and comprehensive account of any use of restraint, which is compliant with the regulations.

The home has clear policies and procedures in place to address young people who are absent without permission or are deemed 'missing'. Young people are aware of these protocols and understand they are in place for their safety. The organisation has revised, agreed protocols in place with the police and other agencies that establish action to be taken in the event of young people going missing or being absent without permission. In recent month these trends have been on the decline and when they do happen, staff act in accordance with procedures and maintain good records.

The organisation has policies and procedures in place with regard to the safe vetting and selection of staff. Since the last inspection, two new members of staff have been appointed. Staff personnel files evidence that vetting procedures have been followed and full information has been obtained. The home has recently recruited a human resources company to assist the service develop improved staff disciplinary procedures.

The home's premises is appropriately secure and staff maintain the building safely.

There are no health and safety concerns. The premises provide a safe environment as a result of routine maintenance and sound fire precautions. Staff regularly conduct building checks and fire drills. Young people are comfortable and feel safe in their surroundings.

Leadership and management

good

This inspection notes that the leadership and management of the home has significantly improved since the last full inspection conducted some 14 months ago. Leaders are making better use of external partners to assist in developing a more therapeutic approach in working with young people. Staff now work in closer partnership with, for example, the home's independent consultant, workers from CAMHS, the police and health and educational professionals. External partners are positive about the home's efforts to improve its services. A local authority representative comments via feedback form, 'Staff provide regular updates and reports. They work well with my young person, although under difficult circumstances. The atmosphere and environment at the placement is homely and calm'.

The home is well run. The home's Registered Manager has good residential child care experience and is currently undertaking the NVQ 5 management course to enhance existing business skills. The management team demonstrate a commitment to improving the home's service provision and there is a clear and ambitious developmental plan that outlines how these improvements are to be made. This was not the case at the home's last full inspection. The service is financially viable. The previous inspection resulted in two recommendations which have been satisfactorily resolved.

The home's Statement of Purpose clearly outlines the aims and objectives of the service; the children's guide remains in draft and requires completion and further revision to make the document more user-friendly.

The service employs a sufficient number of staff to ensure the needs of young people are met. Additional staff are available to work in the home to increase the level of supervision required to keep young people safe. The home's staff group are experienced and most are well qualified. However, two staff members are yet to enrol onto required NVQ training at level 3. This is to ensure staff have training to help support and inform their knowledge, skills and practices in working effectively with young people. Staff training opportunities are good and staff benefit from a varied training programme largely facilitated by external trainers including the host local authority. Staff support and supervision is consistent and these meet the development needs of staff members. Staff are appraised on an annual basis.

The home has good, improved monitoring systems in place. The Registered Manager regularly monitors the quality of care provided. This process includes obtaining the

views of young people and others through newly developed feedback forms. Managers have reviewed the home's supervisory processes and more keenly monitor staff performance and individual staff needs. Case file records are well maintained and appropriate authorities are notified of significant events.

Regulation 34 quality of care reports are regularly completed and this provides a good overview of the home's operation and function. Regulation 33 visits and subsequent reports provide further insight into the home's strengths and weaknesses and how service issues are to be resolved. The leadership and management of the home is effective and this enhances continued service improvement, resulting in good quality care and positive outcomes for young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.