

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC030367
Inspection date	2 July 2009
Inspector	Clare Davies
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	4 March 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 independent, charitable school is also registered as a children's home. The school accommodates up to 42 boys and girls, usually aged between nine and 19. The school follows the principles of care and education developed by Rudolf Steiner. The school has residential accommodation in seven houses known as house groups. Three of the school's house groups are attached to the main school campus, the remaining four house groups are all situated within a mile or so of the school. The trust that runs the school has been accredited as an Awarding Centre for National Vocational Qualifications.

Summary

This was an unannounced random inspection, focusing on all key standards of staying safe and the one recommendation made at the previous inspection. The service continues to provide good care and facilities to young people with an outstanding commitment to safeguarding. Young people's behaviour is managed very well and staff receive excellent guidance and training on how to best meet the young people's needs and preferences. Young people are fully protected by robust recruitment procedures and comprehensive health and safety policies which are fully implemented in practice. There are no actions or recommendations as a result of this visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has arranged for ancillary staff to receive an update on safeguarding matters following their induction period and has a system in place to ensure that this training is ongoing.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The provider's commitment to safeguarding is outstanding. Comprehensive policies and trained staff form a strong foundation from which high quality pastoral care is delivered to young people. Excellent levels of monitoring by senior managers ensure that the national minimum standards are met with an emphasis on striving to improve and achieve higher standards of care. The staff are fully aware of the importance of ensuring that the young people are able to have their privacy respected and have developed practices which provide a balance with good levels of supervision. Information is kept securely and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that their work remains confidential.

Young people are encouraged to speak up when they are not satisfied and have ready access to a complaints form. A designated senior member of staff collates any complaints and ensures that the issues raised are investigated. Records confirm that young people do use this system either independently or with staff assistance. The records are monitored to identify any patterns or trends. The designated person for child protection is suitably trained and qualified, he maintains regular liaison with the local authority safeguarding team. The provider embraces multi-agency working, recognising the importance of working together for the benefit and

safety of young people and the staff. All new staff receive a briefing on child protection procedures as part of their induction on their first day. There are many updates and training events to follow ensuring all staff receive training annually. To counter any bullying there are good staffing levels and such incidents are addressed through behaviour management and individual placement plans. Young people report that some incidents of bullying occur and are dealt with when staff know about it. The school is committed to reducing incidences of bullying behaviour and have systems in place to monitor these events.

The staff are clear on what action to take if a young person leaves site without permission. Staff respond accordingly to individual situations without compromising the safety of young people. Senior staff monitor these events with the aim of identifying any triggers that may have led to the behaviour in order to reduce it re-occurring. The young persons guide details the rules, rewards and praise, sanctions and methods of restraint that may be used. Staff are suitably trained in de-escalation techniques and work with young people on an individual approach to promote positive behaviour. A grading system rewards young people with escalated privileges encouraging them to manage their behaviour responsibly. Some of the older young people at the highest grade can have the opportunity to live in a semi-independent house with additional privileges. The young people who have achieved this level of responsibility enjoy their status and independence, and younger residents are able to see one of the goals they are working towards. The recording of any physical restraint has always been thoroughly recorded and monitored by this provider. This practice has been further developed to incorporate similar recording for any sanctions issued. Staff report that young people's behaviour has generally improved over recent months and records confirm this. This is attributed to the skills and training of staff, clear admission criteria and staff development promoting routine and consistency for young people. As the homes have been upgraded with high quality furniture, fittings and decoration the young people have shown respect for their surroundings and caused minimal damage.

Excellent attention is given to health and safety across the site with dedicated staff to undertake routine checks on fire safety, maintenance and any reported hazards. Young people confirm that they have experienced evacuating the premises at different times of the day and evening; staff are trained in fire safety. The provider has arranged to upgrade the fuse boxes in each house and ensure electrical testing is of a high standard. New vehicles have been purchased to replace minibuses. This will ensure high levels of transport safety and the young people welcome the use of a car to avoid the stigma of being driven in a named minibus. This action demonstrates the provider's continual commitment to improving the quality of care given. Risk assessments relating to young people are incorporated into individual placement plans. Other areas of risk assessment focus on activities, the environment and off site trips. Young people spoke of a forthcoming trip to France and a summer holiday in Devon, thorough risk assessments have been produced for these outings. There is a robust procedure adopting good practice for safer recruitment. Recruitment is managed centrally by key people ensuring checks have been completed before permitting new staff to care for young people. Additional references are sought when applicants have not previously worked with children and young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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

There are no recommendations.