

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC032496
Inspection date	11 November 2009
Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	12 August 2009
--------------------------------	----------------

© Crown copyright 2009

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

The home is a local authority children's home for six young people of either sex, aged from 11 years old up to 17 years old.

The home is a purpose-built, detached property situated on a private residential estate. The accommodation provided is over two floors. On the first floor, there are individual bedrooms, of which one has been converted to be used as a gym, staff sleep-in accommodation and two bathrooms with toilet and shower facilities are also provided. On the ground floor, there is a lounge, dining room, quiet room, art room, laundry, kitchen, toilet facilities and offices.

To the rear of the property, there is an extensive, enclosed grassed garden with a patio area. To one side of the garden is the home's allotment. The home has good access to public transport links, nearby towns and cities.

Summary

The inspection of the home was unannounced. All key national minimum standards were inspected. Actions and recommendations previously identified were re-assessed to monitor compliance with the standards and regulations.

The home provides care for young people to good quality standards. Young people receive good levels of personal support from staff, who remain dedicated to them. Their physical and emotional health needs are actively promoted and services are provided in conjunction with their assessed needs for support. Young people are treated with respect and relationships between young people and staff are clearly valued.

As a result of this inspection a small number of recommendations have been identified for the registered provider to consider. By following these recommendations, staff will be able to monitor young people's dietary needs and ensure that the recording of restraints fully meet the standards and regulations.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There are no actions resulting from the home's previous inspection. The one recommendation previously identified is still in the process of being sourced in respect of ensuring that domestic staff receive some form of child protection training.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children and young people's health needs are effectively assessed by staff. Each young person has an individual health record, which shows how staff will meet their identified health needs. Staff ensure that young people attend their routine medical appointments and they maintain up-to-date records of all health appointments and outcomes. They provide young people with good advice on relevant health issues to enable them to develop healthy lifestyles and make positive choices about their health.

Young people are provided with a healthy, wholesome and nutritious diet. They are involved in menu planning and are able to cook meals for themselves. For those young people who are older cooking is actively encouraged to promote their independence and development of life skills. The range of foods provided by staff are both varied and culturally diverse. Staff promote healthy eating, but they do not routinely record what foods individual young people consume. This means young people's individual eating patterns are not best monitored to ensure that every young person is eating healthily.

The home has clear procedures in place for the administration, storage and handling of young people's medication. Staff implement the home's medication procedures safely and they are trained to administer emergency treatment, where required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's welfare and safety is actively promoted. Staff understand their duties and safeguarding responsibilities. Risk taking behaviours are carefully assessed to allow staff to manage young people's behaviours safely. Staff receive updated training on safeguarding to further develop their knowledge and skills. This enables staff to keep young people safe from abuse, exploitation and harm.

Young people feel that staff are there to help them and they receive good advice from staff about protecting themselves. Staff advise young people about health and safety issues to promote their individual well being and safety. Young people's privacy is respected by staff and their private records are securely stored. Staff follow agreed protocols for managing unauthorised absences efficiently.

Young people say that bullying is not an issue. The dynamics of the current resident group are managed safely and records show there have been no recent incidents of bullying behaviour. Information and advice about bullying is available to young people in the children's guide, and there is also information on bullying displayed within the home. Staff ensure that young people know what behaviours constitute bullying, so young people know what behaviours are wrong and unacceptable.

Staff are trained in care and control and they are able to use de-escalation strategies to address challenging behaviour. The use of sanctions to address unacceptable behaviour is both consistent and fair. A few minor irregularities with the recording of restraints were identified. There were occasions where the need for physical intervention had not been made explicitly clear, which means that the behaviours leading up to staff's intervention had not been comprehensively completed.

Health and safety matters are consistently addressed to ensure that the home is a safe place for young people to live and for staff to work. There is regular and routine testing of the home's fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire evacuation procedures. Gas, electrical and fire fighting equipment is all contractually serviced each year. Staff provide young people with good advice on household health and safety.

The home's recruitment practices ensure that those employed have their suitability to work with children assessed. All of the required and necessary checks have been undertaken to make sure that young people are not exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive good support and encouragement with their education. They are encouraged to attend school and pursue further education to enhance their career prospects and future employment opportunities. There is evidence of the home requesting personal education plans and statements of special educational needs, where these are needed.

Young people are able to learn life skills with staff, so that they are better prepared for life within the adult world. This enables young people to apply for jobs and complete application forms independently, or with support and encouragement from staff. The development of life skills increases young people's self-esteem, individual confidence and social skills.

Young people receive good support and guidance from staff to help them achieve stability in their daily lives. Staff engage young people in direct work by exploring any behavioural issues, which may hinder, or have a negative impact, on their lives. Key working is used as a supportive tool to offer young people support when they need it most. Those identified as requiring specialist support receive support through specially trained workers. Staff work well as a team and they work collectively with other agencies to secure improvement to provide appropriate services and support to meet young people's needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Care plans produced by staff provide good insight into the needs of individual young people. They cover all the areas required by the standards and include proper consideration of a young person's needs. The plan includes a full assessment of emotional, health, cultural and religious needs. They also provide details on the arrangements made to promote and facilitate contact. Young people are made aware of their individual plans and their rights to access information held about them.

Young people are provided with practical support to maintain contact with their families and friends. Contact enables young people to maintain their identity and strengthen their established links. Review meetings take place for young people within the recommended timescales. Young people are encouraged to attend their meetings and participate in them. Their involvement in this process enables them to share their views and experiences about their care.

Young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive way. However, there are times where emergency admissions have occurred, which has the potential to disrupt the smooth operations of the home. A small number of emergency admissions have occurred since the home's previous inspection.

Young people are actively involved in decisions made within the home. There is good communication between young people and staff, and there are formal systems to enable young people to share their views, ideas and experiences. Young people have the opportunity to be consulted, through resident group meetings and one-to-one sessions with staff.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is maintained to good quality standards and offers young people a spacious, well equipped and pleasantly decorated home. The home is located in a centralised position making it ideal for young people to access local places of interest. For example, the home is close to sports centres, schools, cinemas and shopping centres.

Young people are provided with their own separate bedrooms, which they are free to personalise. They are provided with good facilities to study, which enables them to complete their homework. Young people are provided with an arts room for them to pursue their artistic talents or hobbies. The home provides young people with good quality living accommodation and staff ensure the home is kept clean, and that repairs are undertaken promptly.

Young people are supported by staff in obtaining relevant independent living skills. They are encouraged and shown how to cook, shop, plan and prepare their own meals. They are advised about health and safety issues and are shown how to complete basic household tasks, which helps young people prepare for their eventual independence. Young people have pathway plans completed for them to show them what support they will need to help them make the transition towards their independence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home is managed both efficiently and effectively. There is consistent managerial monitoring of the home's performance, which is undertaken to evaluate and review the way operates and performs. The manager routinely audits the home's administration systems to identify performance issues, so that action can be taken, where necessary, to improve performance. Quality assurance visits also occur independently to assess whether, or not, appropriate standards of care are being provided. The manager uses these reports to look at the home's capacity for improvement.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The children's guide makes clear the home's commitment to promoting equality and diversity. It includes information and advice for young people about various faiths and cultures. Young people receive fair and equal treatment within the home. They have the same opportunities provided to them, so that every individual is able to maximise their true potential.

The home's statement of purpose provides good information about the home, and the children's guide provides young people with good information about services available to them. This enables young people to know what they can expect from the home. The guide also provides information for young people on local places interest.

Staffing is organised to meet the numbers and needs of young people resident. Staff between them have the collective experience, knowledge and skills to meet young people's diverse needs. The home has exceeded the achievement ratio of staff attaining the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3. Staff have good access to relevant training to help them in their capacity to provide care to vulnerable young people.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure there are systems in place to record the foods consumed by young people to monitor their healthy eating patterns (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that restraint records include a detailed account of the reasons why physical intervention was used. (NMS 22.9)