

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034797
Inspector	Louise Redfern
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Norfolk County Council Children's Services
Registered person address	Norfolk County Council, Chief Executives County Hall, Martineau Lane NORWICH NR1 2DH
Responsible individual	Peter James Ronan
Registered manager	Neil Marjoram
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	30/01/2015
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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	adequate
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are settled in this home, this is because of the quality of care provided by the dedicated staff team. Young people report that they feel safe living at the home and that they feel listened to. Parents and professionals support young people's view in the quality of care provided. One professional commented, 'X is thriving in placement because of the care and relationships he has built with the staff team.'

Young people maintain clear attachments to their family and community. They receive well-planned care, taking into account their individual needs. The home promotes positive outcomes for all young people. Young people are encouraged and supported to understand the importance of maintaining good health. There are good links with other specialist agencies that provide useful advice and guidance to staff and young people about the dangers associated with some lifestyle choices.

The Registered Manager has a development plan in place and is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the home. He has a clear understanding of the changing needs of the young people referred and placed at the home. This has ensured effective relationships are developed with local and specific policing teams. One police officer stated, 'I have confidence in the managers ability to review the risks of young people and take action accordingly, very good relationships have been

established with the local officers.'

Areas identified for improvement at this inspection relate to education attendance for all young people, capturing young people's, parents and placing authorities views as part of the appraisal and monitoring processes and ensuring HMCI receives the Statement of Purpose following any amendments.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides long-term residential care for up to six young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by the local Children's Services Department.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
18/04/2013	Full	good
01/10/2012	Interim	good progress
24/05/2012	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)	notify the HMCI of any revision of the Statement of Purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5 (a) (b))	27/02/2015
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(3))	27/02/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure where children no longer receive compulsory full time education the home supports them to participate in further education, training or employment (NMS 8.9)
- ensure that all appraisals takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people say they are happy with life at the home and they can talk to staff if they have any concerns or worries. They feel valued, respected and listened to. Young people say they feel safe and cared for. This enables young people to develop their self-esteem and emotional resilience.

Educational outcomes for young people are inconsistent. For example, some young people have excellent attendance at school and are making good progress. However, some young people who are post 16 are not attending education, training or secured employment.

Young people are encouraged to enjoy healthy lifestyles by engaging in positive activities, such as playing football and eating a balanced diet. Their health care needs are well met. However, engagement with health care professionals is inconsistent. The majority of young people do attend regular routine health care appointments, but some refuse to attend regular appointments, despite tremendous encouragement from staff. However, they will attend if they are in need of treatment. Young people have good information and access to external support agencies with regard to anti-smoking and drug and alcohol awareness. Despite this support some young people continue to smoke and use cannabis.

Young people are making progress to develop a positive understanding of their own identity and they enjoy regular contact with their friends and family. They are encouraged to develop links in the local community and join in local activities. However, they often choose to spend time away from the home with their own peer groups and say that they do not want to live in the locality of the home.

Young people are developing their life skills through the internal independence package. They say, 'the staff are helping me to try to get ready to move on from the home. I am on independence I do my own shopping and cooking.' Young people acquire the skills to prepare them to move into independent living.

Quality of care **outstanding**

A particular strength of this home is the staff team's ability to form exceptional relationships with individual young people. One young person said, 'I like my keyworker she is lovely, I like it when she brings in her dog.' Staff continue to offer support to young people when they move on from the home, which maintains relationships and offers stability and support to young people when they first move into independent living. One member of staff commented, 'I love my job, I want to

make a difference.'

Staff strive to ensure that young people engage in purposeful pursuits to assist in the development of social skills and confidence. Young people participate in a range of activities such as local music clubs, youth groups and climbing clubs.

The home actively seeks young people's views, wishes and feelings about the running of the home. Effective consultation with young people is achieved through individual and group discussions, formal young people's meetings and regular reviews. Young people confirm that staff listen to them and care about what they want. Although there have been no complaints young people have a strong understanding of the process and feel staff would respond seriously and follow the procedure. These practices serve to enhance relationships between young people and staff which has a positive effect on behaviour management.

The provision of structure, routines and clear boundaries creates a safe and emotionally supportive environment for young people to develop and grow. Staff care for young people in line with their care plan and fully meet their needs in relation to ethnicity, culture and emotional well-being. The mixed staff team are creative at looking at ways of celebrating difference amongst young people. This serves to assist young people with their development of identity and a positive self-view.

The home is comfortably furnished and has homely touches throughout. Young people choose their bedroom decoration and have input into the furnishings in the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people confirm they feel safe living at the home. Placing social workers and parents say they have no safeguarding concerns. Staff have a strong understanding of safe working practice, their knowledge is underpinned by regular training, policies and procedures.

Staff strike a balance between protection and enabling young people to take age appropriate risks. This approach ensures opportunities for personal growth and social development are not limited and young people enjoy the same social experiences as their peers. For example, young people are enabled to safely travel independently to see friends and maintain support networks away from the home.

Since the last inspection, there have been some incidents of bullying. However, the management and staff team have challenged young people's behaviour and understanding of bullying. As a result young people now do not identify bullying as an issue in the home.

New staff have been recruited since the last inspection. They have been checked and vetted through the authority's recruitment procedures. The Registered Manager takes an active role in recruitment, ensuring the safe recruitment of staff who are able to meet young people's needs in the home.

Young people, given their individual starting points are making some progress to reduce their risk taking behaviour. There continues to be incidents of missing from home episodes. However, staff work closely with external agencies, such as the police to support young people to return to the home as quickly as possible. One grandparent said, 'staff have bent over backwards to support my grandson.'

Staff are trained in behaviour management and restraint. They effectively utilise their experience and training in de-escalation to encourage young people to find alternative ways of managing their emotions and frustrations. As a result, challenging behaviour is managed effectively and there have been few incidents of restraint since the last inspection.

Young people and staff are regularly involved in fire drills to ensure they know how to safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire. Staff undertake routine health and safety checks and fire equipment is regularly maintained by qualified engineers. This ensures young people live in a physically safe environment that is free from hazards.

Leadership and management

good

The home is well managed by a competent, suitably qualified manager who was registered for this service in 2012; he holds the NVQ Level 4 residential child care management award and a Diploma in Social Work. He has over 10 year's managerial experience. He is child-focused and committed to providing a service that places young people's needs at the heart of care practice. There were no actions set at the last inspection for improvement.

The Statement of Purpose clearly sets out the home's aims and objectives. However, HMCI had not received the updated document; the Registered Manager addressed this at inspection. Supplementary information is available in the form of a child-friendly children's guide.

The Registered Manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home and has a development plan in place for improvement. He makes good use of a range of monitoring activities relating to young people's progress, their records, quality of care and conduct of the home. However, there is limited evidence of consultation with children, parents and placing authorities. Consequently, while the Registered Manager has a thorough knowledge of the home, the process for monitoring and improving the quality of care for young people is limited.

Staff say they feel supported because of management support, regular team meetings, supervisions and detailed handovers. They have their performance appraised annually. However, young people do not have the opportunity to contribute to this process. This is a missed opportunity to gather young people's views on the quality of care they feel they receive from individual staff members. Good training opportunities are available for staff as part of the authorities' on-going training programme. As a result, young people are cared for by competent staff who have the right skills to meet their individual needs.

Young people's records are of a good standard. They clearly document young people's needs, how these needs are to be met and the progress young people are making. Information is stored securely and shared confidentially to protect young people's privacy.

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.