

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Dennis Bradley
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 children's home provides care and accommodation for up to three children, of either sex, aged 12 years to 17 years.

The house is detached with an enclosed garden to the rear. The ground floor is made up of a lounge with satellite television, a dining room with a computer and a kitchen.

The first floor has bedrooms, the staff office and a bathroom. Each young person has their own bedroom.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced, interim inspection. It assessed the key national minimum standards relating to the outcome staying safe. The inspection also assessed whether the registered persons had met the one recommendation made at the previous inspection. This was about how the home consults parents about the running of the home.

As this was an interim inspection, it did not assess all of the key national minimum standards. Consequently there was not enough evidence to assess or amend the overall outcome judgement made at the previous inspection. Outcomes in staying safe are good and the overall quality rating continues to be good.

The three young people currently living at the home were present for part of the inspection.

The home provides a secure, safe setting for the young people. Staff respect the privacy and dignity of young people and make sure their welfare is promoted. Staff are also good at managing behaviour positively. However, staff do not use the home's bullying log book to record all incidents of bullying and this makes it more difficult to monitor the effectiveness of the home's policy on countering bullying. Also some of the home's risk assessments are not fully effective.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place for consulting parents about how the home is being run. This recommendation has not been met and will be repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They each have their own bedroom to which they have appropriate access. Doors to bathrooms and toilets have appropriate locks. Staff make sure information about young people is handled confidentially and stored securely.

There are clear procedures for managing complaints appropriately and ensuring young people are listened to. Staff make sure the young people are aware of who they can go to if they have any complaints or concerns. The home has not received any complaints since the last inspection.

The home has appropriate procedures for safeguarding young people from abuse. There are suitable arrangements for making sure that staff receive child protection training. This helps staff protect young people from abuse and ensures they respond appropriately to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Staff work hard to create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. Staff try to help the young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each others diverse needs. The home has a clear anti-bullying policy and staff have completed bullying risk assessments. However, these were not reviewed or updated following a recent incident. Also, staff do not record all incidents of bullying in the home's bullying log. This makes it more difficult to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the home's policy on countering bullying.

Staff take appropriate action when young people go missing or are absent from the home without permission. There are suitable policies and procedures to help make sure this happens.

Staff encourage and support the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. They are good at giving positive messages to young people to reinforce acceptable behaviour. When staff use sanctions these are relevant and reasonable. There have been no incidents involving the use of physical restraint since the last inspection. There are clear procedures and guidance for staff regarding how they should manage the behaviour of young people. All of the staff have had training in positive behaviour management. They are also trained to focus on how to repair the consequences of unacceptable behaviour, rather than on who to blame and punish.

There are satisfactory systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe

from the risk of fire and other potential hazards. For example, there are good arrangements for carrying out regular checks of equipment such as fire alarms. Staff also carry out a range of risk assessments, including individual risk assessments for each young person. These help identify what can be done to reduce or avoid risks where practicable and appropriate. However, some of the risk assessments are not fully effective. For example, staff have not updated one risk assessment and the strategies identifying what can be done to reduce or avoid the risks are inconsistent. Also, for another risk assessment completed almost two years ago, the strategies identified to reduce the risks have not yet been fully implemented.

The local authority takes appropriate action to help make sure the home only employs suitable people. It carries out a range of checks on new staff before they start working at the home. There are suitable arrangements for monitoring and managing visitors to the home. These help ensure they do not have inappropriate access to 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 good.

Staff are good at talking to young people about how the home is run and involving them in decisions on matters that affect them. Staff take the views and opinions of the young people seriously and where possible and appropriate act upon them. Staff also consult parents and carers about the care of their children but not about matters such as the adequacy of staff or the standard of the accommodation.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ascertain, on a regular and frequent basis, the opinions and views of parents that include the elements listed in the national minimum standard (NMS 8.6)
- ensure the home's policy on countering bullying is implemented, in particular the guidance on recording bullying incidents (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that risk assessments clearly identify the action to be taken to reduce risks to an acceptable level where practicable and to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable risks. Ensure that risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated where necessary (NMS 26.2)