

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035241
Inspection date	20/06/2012
Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	19/01/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is operated by a charitable trust and registered to accommodate four children of either sex aged from five to 17 years who have a sensory impairment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The home provides personalised care and makes great effort to include the young people in their care planning and to reflect upon their own actions. The views of placing authorities and other stakeholders are frequently sought to contribute towards the placement plan. The staff team provide an outstanding quality of care and make every effort to engage the young people in discussions about their behaviour and needs with great success.

Overall, the young people have made good progress in their educational achievement and building relationships. Young people participate in a healthy lifestyle and do not involve themselves in criminal activity. Feedback from outside agencies on the young people's placement is extremely positive and parents consider the staff team have succeeded in getting their children to engage in meaningful activities. Young people manage their negative behaviour better as a response to a staff team that is non-judgemental and shows a consistent concern for the welfare of the young people.

Leadership and safeguarding are good at the home and a realistic approach has been taken to managing the risks presented by the young people. Collective efforts by the home, internal health professionals and the placing authority have improved the welfare and safety of young people. The home is well presented and provides a homely and spacious environment for the young people to live in.

This inspection identifies areas for improvement around the quality assurance systems and the Statement of Purpose.

Areas for improvement

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
4 (2001)	include in the Statement of Purpose the matters listed in Schedule 1; specifically the name, relevant qualifications and experience of the registered provider (Regulation 4 (1))	31/08/2012
33 (2001)	interview with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4) (a))	31/07/2012

Recommendations

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

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people have made good progress since the beginning of their placement to form and sustain relationships with staff and adults that are close to them. Some young people have struggled to maintain age-appropriate friendships but now have gained confidence in peer group situations. Social workers who have known the young people for some time recognise the positive steps forward they have taken. Young people are benefiting from the stability and consistency provided by the staff. One young person in particular has developed the ability to engage with staff to discuss and reflect on his own actions.

Young people receive all the necessary appointments to promote good physical health.

Young people have very good attendance and attainment at school in relation to their starting point at the time of placement. Young people benefit from the high level of support in place for their education. Young people have recently taken exams that previously would not have been possible without the dedication of staff to help the young people succeed. One young person said 'I would not have done as well as I have if it were not for the staff here'.

Young people benefit from regular contact with family members and people that are important to them.

Young people are being prepared by the staff team for independence and to make a successful transition into adult life.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **outstanding**.

Staff develop strong and constructive personal relationships with the young people in their care so that they are able to enforce clear boundaries while sustaining positive relationships with the young people. The daily routine of the home provides the opportunity to promote all aspects of the young people's welfare and development. Staff engage positively with young people and create the everyday opportunities for young people to develop good relationships with adults and peers. Parents and professionals that are involved with the service comment, 'Staff are exceptional; they always go above and beyond their duties', 'they care so much', 'they make young people feel so important'. This aids in making young people feel valued. Young people enjoy living at the home and say they have a good relationship with the whole of the staff team. This means the young people engage positively with staff and are able to discuss and reflect on many aspects of their care.

There are excellent opportunities in place to ensure that the views and wishes of young people accommodated in the home are taken into account in relation to decisions about daily life at the home. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care. The manager regularly seeks the views of young people's parents and social workers to include in the placement plan for young people. The views are used to support continual improvement in the quality of care provided and to ensure a collective approach in the care of young people at the home.

The whole support staff ensure that each placement plan is personalised to each individual young person. The placement plans are extensive and clearly focus on realistic outcomes for the young people. Young people are continuously involved in the development of their placement plans to ensure their views are included. This means they are also aware of the measures in place by the staff to promote their emotional health and general well-being and have ample opportunities to comment.

The staff team make every effort to enable young people to attend school. Resulting in 100% attendance which is a vast improvement compared to young people having histories of poor attendance and exclusion. Staff maintain daily contact with the education setting and actively work with school in order to overcome any problems preventing the young people from participating in a curriculum suitable to their needs. The home provides excellent facilities and space for the young people to complete homework to ensure there are no barriers in place for the completion of education. Parents state that 'the staff continually encourage our child to undertake

homework as soon as they arrive home from school'. The staff team promote participation in education with individualised incentives for young people in an effort for them to reach their full potential.

Staff relentlessly promote a healthy lifestyle at the home and actively discourage the young people's participation in unhealthy practices. Health practitioners from within the organisation visit the home on a regular basis providing young people with advice and guidance. They also deliver health promotion advice to support staff, which they are able to use in their care of young people.

The staff team offers an extensive range of leisure and social activities for the young people to enjoy, which are tailored to reflect personal needs and interests. These activities aid them to achieve good health and give them a sense of achievement. Young people report taking advantage of swimming pools, football facilities along with athletic clubs. They also enjoy the membership of local clubs associated with sensory impairment. All the young people shared their pride and enthusiasm at presenting some artwork that they have recently completed and have on display in the living areas of the home.

The arrangements for storing and recording medication at the home are effective. The procedures for accurately administering medication are rigid and these practices ensure residential pupils receive their prescribed medication safely.

Staff meet the young people's needs as detailed in their placement plans while allowing young people to exercise choice and independence. Young people are able to spend unsupervised time with friends to develop social skills and build confidence. The staff team deliver personalised care to promote the identity of the young people. Social workers say that staff have a very individual approach to the care and support of young people. Ample space is provided for young people to have privacy and freedom within the home while maintaining a safe environment. The house is well kept and has benefited from improvements. Young people say that they are involved in the choosing of the décor for their bedrooms and the style of furniture.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people say they feel safe at the home and bullying is not currently an issue. Young people know the complaints procedure and feel there are staff to whom they can talk. Young people have good access to information helplines if they wish to call outside agencies for advice and support.

Young people are safeguarded because of the staff's clear understanding of the home's safeguarding policy and procedures. Staff are able to demonstrate the action they will take should they have any concerns regarding a young person's safety. Staff are extremely aware of young people's vulnerabilities and risks when in the home and plan effectively to ensure young people remain safe. Staff work very well with social worker's and families to manage young people's personal safety. Staff

carefully and effectively balance the need to protect young people with enabling them to take reasonable risks as part of their ongoing development. Young people are confident to talk to staff about anything that they may be concerned about. This is because of their increasing maturity and confidence in themselves and the staff.

Being missing from care is not an issue. There are no incidents of young people going missing from the home. All young people say that the staff help them to understand the risks and dangers involved in going missing from home. One young person said 'my key worker tells me how to get help if I need it'. This further promotes the safety and well-being of the young people.

Staff are consistent and share the same philosophy in their expectations of the young people. Positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded with praise and incentives while negative behaviour carries a reasonable and fair consequence. This helps to support and promote positive behaviour. One young person said 'there has to be rules, it helps us all live happily together'. The use of restrictive physical intervention is kept to a minimum and only used in exceptional circumstances. Young people always have the opportunity to discuss the disciplinary and control measures they are involved in with staff. The follow-up sessions are carried out in order to promote positive behaviour and for the young people to discuss their views on the incidents.

A sufficient number of skilled staff are on duty to manage the risk presented by the young people. All staff have undergone rigorous recruitment and the staff files checked show staff have been vetted in line with requirements.

The home is a safe environment to live in, where comprehensive environmental checks and risk assessments are in place. Great care is taken by the manager to create a safe environment which does not unnecessarily prevent young people from taking part in household activities. Health and safety notices are kept to a minimum to create a homely environment for the young people.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that sets out the aims, objectives and services of the home. However, the document does not contain all the required elements. There is no information relating to the qualifications or experience of the persons responsible for the service. The home meets the aims and objectives of their Statement of Purpose. This means young people, their families, social worker's and placing authorities are clear on the type of care and support young people can expect to receive.

The home is led and managed by a committed Registered Manager and senior staff team. The management team demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering tailored care and support to young people's individual needs. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the good progress young people continue to make across all areas of their development.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. The home demonstrates a capacity for sustained improvement based upon performance over the last year and continued development of good outcomes for young people. There are no requirements or recommendations to meet from the previous inspection. Monitoring of the home covers the required elements. The manager and the independent person for the organisation monitor the home on a monthly basis and report on any areas for development. Although the reports from the independent visitor make clear recommendations, there is no consistent evidence that young people are consulted as part of these visits. Therefore it is not clear whether young people can actively contribute about the quality of their care during independent visits.

The managers within the home consult with social worker's and family members as part of their monitoring. This provides a wider view on how the home is perceived.

Records and documentation are well maintained and stored securely. They contain up-to-date written information which provides a comprehensive picture of young people's progress, development and needs. Clear systems are in place to ensure all appropriate persons are notified of any significant events. This ensures transparency and keeps young people safe.

Young people are cared for by a competent and committed staff team. Staff have a wide range of skills and experiences which effectively meet the needs of young people. Staff and young people, without exception, are very complimentary about the Registered Manager and say that they feel well supported. Regular opportunities are in place to meet as a team. Staff feel it is important young people are able to contribute to their discussions. Consequently, young people are asked to put forward their views and to raise any issues. The feedback provided to young people promotes transparency and means young people continue to have a say in how the home is managed and organised.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.