

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC035380
Inspection date	05/10/2010
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	21/04/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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 Crispins, 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 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

Short-break care and accommodation are provided at the home for six young people aged eight to 17 years, with learning and physical disabilities. The home is a detached property with enclosed gardens. The grounds of the home include a play area, orchard, sensory garden and an area of lawn. The house has three floors. On the ground floor there are 10 rooms, which include a computer room, a room used for imaginary play, an art and craft room, sensory room, kitchen and quiet room. On the second floor there are single bedrooms for each young person, a staff sleep-in room, staff office, a number of family-sized bathrooms and a dining room. The third floor contains the manager's office, meeting room and store rooms. The home has a detached garage, which contains a soft play area and cinema.

The home is situated in a residential area and is near to local shops. The home is close to local bus routes which provide easy access to the town centre, with its larger shops and leisure facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced key inspection of the home. All of the outcome areas for young people were inspected. The outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, organisation and economic well-being are all outstanding and overall, this is an outstanding service. Young people's needs are fully identified and services adapted to meet those needs. High levels of individual support are given to each young person who is supported to develop self help skills associated with daily living and to take responsibility for personal actions. Young people are encouraged to participate in community based activities and to develop adult responsibilities. All young people living at the home attend education.

Six young people were present at the time of the inspection, all of whom participated in the inspection process.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the home's manager has improved the system for recording when medication has been administered. Written records now show clearly which member of staff has been responsible for administering specific medication.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Members of staff ensure young people have easy access to fresh fruit and vegetables and follow a healthy, varied diet. Nutritious meals are provided and young people are supported, within the limits of their ability, to be involved in menu planning and shopping. Some young people who live at the home have health care needs that warrant a specialised diet. Specialised diets are fully catered for within the home. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said, 'they encourage me to eat healthy things like fruit and vegetables'. Young people are encouraged to use the garden and the play equipment. This helps young people to take exercise and to stay fit and healthy. Young people living at the home enjoy a healthy and well-balanced diet and healthy eating is promoted.

Some of the young people who live at the home have complex health care needs. Young people living at the home have their health care needs fully identified at the time of their admission and members of staff work actively, in partnership with parents and health care professionals to ensure that all young people remain fit and well. Members of staff monitor the health care needs of individual young people very closely and take quick, appropriate action when necessary to ensure their well-being. One parent spoken to at the time of the inspection said, 'I have every confidence in the manager and staff members, they keep me fully informed about what happens'.

Young people living at the home are protected by the home's medication administration systems. Policies and procedures relating to the safe handling and administration of medication are in place. All members of staff have undertaken formal training in the safe handling and administration of medication, which includes, where necessary, the administration of emergency medication. Records relating to the administration of controlled drugs were however unclear. Training in the safe handling and administration of medication is kept up to date. Written records examined at the time of the inspection were completed accurately. Audit systems are in place to ensure regular checks are made and that any mistakes or discrepancies are quickly highlighted so corrective action can be taken. This is very good practice and the welfare of children living at the home is fully safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Members of staff are pleasant, friendly and caring towards all the young people in their care. Personal care tasks are undertaken in privacy and the dignity of the young person is upheld. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. Only members of staff working at the home can gain access to toilets and bathrooms from the outside in an emergency. The home has policies and procedures in place, which explain what action members of staff should take when it is necessary to search a young person's bedroom. No room searches have ever been carried out at the home. Personal information relating to

each young person is stored securely to prevent unauthorised access. Young people living at the home are treated with the utmost dignity and respect.

There are policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints in an effective and timely manner. There has been one complaint made since the last inspection. Written records show that the complainant has been kept fully informed about the progress made in investigating their complaint. A number of compliments have also been received from satisfied parents and social workers. Young people living at the home have access to complaints information and they are actively encouraged and supported to make their needs known. All members of staff working at the home have received training in the complaints process. This proactive approach to complaints is excellent.

A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures is available in the home. There has been no child protection referral made since the last inspection. All members of staff working at the home have undertaken training in child protection. Training in child protection is updated at frequent intervals in order to ensure members of staff remain confident and competent to deal with any child protection concerns. One young person was asked if they enjoyed coming to the home and felt safe there and replied, 'I don't come here because I have to, I come here because I want to'. Young people living at the home are fully protected from exploitation and abuse.

Young people are fully protected from being targeted by bullies. The home has policies and procedures in place with regard to countering bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The home's young person's guide includes information for young people, written in an easy to understand format about what action they should take if they feel bullies are targeting them. Members of staff working at the home have all received training in countering bullying.

The home has up to date policies and procedures in place with regard to what action staff should take if a young person is absent without authority. There have been no occasions since the last inspection when a young person has been absent without authority. One young person said, 'I feel very safe here, I love it'. Members of staff provide consistently high levels of supervision and quality care to young people to help keep them safe.

The home has policies and procedures in place relating to the safe holding or restraint of young people, and members of staff have received appropriate training. Staff training is reviewed and updated at regular intervals. Restraint records are retained within a separate bound and numbered book used specifically for that purpose. There have been two restraints used within the home since the last inspection. Members of staff actively promote socially acceptable behaviour and encourage young people to develop adult responsibilities through encouragement, advice and support. The home also has policies and procedures in place relating to the sanctions that can be used to help young people improve their behaviour. Sanctions are very rarely used as a means of encouraging positive behaviour.

Members of staff working at the home are skilled, competent and experienced practitioners, who prefer to use less punitive measures as a means of helping a young person develop and mature.

Young people, members of staff and visitors to the home, are protected from fire and other hazards within the home. Regular fire drills take place although it is unclear whether any of these have taken place at night. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out at regular intervals and regular fire drills are carried out. Written evidence that the home has current public and employee liability insurance to a minimum value was available at the time of the inspection.

The home has a very stable, experienced and committed staff team. There are excellent recruitment and selection processes in place. Safety checks are carried out to ensure the suitability of each applicant. Each member of staff has provided references from previous employers or those that know them. Visitors to the home are asked to clearly identify themselves on their arrival and to sign the visitors' book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The progress of each young person is frequently monitored. Key workers liaise closely with the parents of young people who stay at the home to ensure that essential information is both gained and shared. One parent spoken to during the inspection said, 'they keep me fully informed, and I can relax when he's here'. Young people living at the home receive individual help and support quickly and efficiently when they need it or when they request it. Meetings between key workers and young people take place at frequent intervals. The outcome of these meetings is discussed with other members of staff in order to ensure that essential information is shared and that young people continue to receive consistently high levels of care and support.

All the young people living at the home attend school. The home has a proactive approach in supporting young people to progress with their education and to achieve their maximum potential. This approach to helping young people is of a very high quality. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said, 'I go to school every day but when I come here I go on outings, I do baking, listen to music and play in the garden'. Young people living at the home are actively encouraged and supported with their education and to develop their own hobbies and interests.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people living at the home are appropriately placed. Meetings are held prior to admission with parents, school teachers and health care professionals to help to ensure all essential information is available, all needs have been identified and that the placement is appropriate. Young people are offered the opportunity to visit the

home on several occasions prior to their admission. Each young person has their own placement plan, which outlines what their needs are and how they will be met. In order to help ensure that needs are met, the manager and members of staff undertake individual risk assessments of each young person and devise more detailed care plans following admissions. The admissions process to the home is excellent.

The manager and members of staff regularly attend review meetings with partner agencies, and strategies are developed to help meet identified needs quickly. This pro-active approach to the care of young people living at the home is excellent.

The service provided at the home is a short-break respite care service. Contact with friends and family is maintained throughout a young person's stay at the home.

The admissions procedure for the home is very thorough and individual to each young person. Young people, and their parents, visit the home prior to a placement being agreed. Different strategies are discussed to consider the most appropriate manner in which to introduce a young person to the home. Members of staff work extremely hard to try to make young people feel welcome and to understand what it will be like to live there.

Young people are encouraged and supported, within the limits of their own ability, to make decisions about their lives and to influence how the home is run. Young people are encouraged to raise issues, which affect their lives. Parents of young people living at the home are actively encouraged to provide feedback about how the home is run, what it does well and how it can be improved. This is exceptional practice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The manager and members of staff work hard to encourage and support young people to take responsibility for their actions, to develop socially acceptable behaviour and to develop adult responsibilities. Each young person is encouraged and supported, within their capabilities, to learn independence skills and activities for daily living. One young person who returned an inspection questionnaire said, 'they encourage me to dress myself and to wash myself'. Those young people who are old enough, have transition plans to aid their transition from the home and children's services into adult services. The home's manager and members of staff adopt an extremely pro-active approach in this process in order to ensure the transition of young people has the greatest chance of success.

The home is fully adapted and equipped to meet the needs of young people with a disability. Young people enjoy homely accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to an extremely high standard. The home's grounds have been developed to provide a safe and secure place where all young people can play and enjoy themselves. Ancillary staff employed within the home work extremely hard to keep it clean, tidy and very pleasant.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Members of staff support, enable and encourage young people to participate in community-based activities on an equal basis and to develop their own identity. The Statement of Purpose has recently been reviewed and accurately describes what young people can expect from living at the home.

Young people are looked after by members of staff who are well supported and properly managed. Not all ancillary staff receive regular, formal supervision and appraisal. The manager makes herself available to talk with members of staff should they need to do so. Staff meetings are held at frequent intervals and full written records of staff meetings are retained.

Young people receive the care and services they need from skilled and competent staff. All residential members of staff are trained to a minimum of National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. This is excellent. There are clear arrangements in place for members of staff to deputise in the absence of the manager. Staff rotas have designated handover periods built into them.

Members of staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the young people living at the home. The home's rotas ensure that, where possible, there is a mix of both male and female staff on duty. Staff sickness and holidays are covered by existing staff members being flexible in their work patterns. Consistency of care is provided to young people.

Young people are looked after by staff who are well trained and fully competent to meet their needs. Training is provided at frequent intervals to ensure staff have the necessary skills, confidence and ability, to meet the diverse and changing needs of the young people living at the home. A record of all training received by members of staff is maintained within the home.

The care of young people living at the home is monitored regularly. A system is in place to ensure performance is monitored and any patterns or issues requiring action are quickly highlighted. The opinion of the young people themselves and their parents is actively sought in order to continue to improve and develop the service provided at the home.

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):

- ensure that all written records relating to the administration of controlled medication are clear and easy to understand (NMS 13.2)
- ensure that at least one fire drill is held at night (NMS 26.8)
- ensure all members of staff receive regular formal supervision. (NMS 28.2)