

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035499
Inspector	Michael McCleave
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Registered person address	County Hall Cross Street BEVERLEY North Humberside HU17 9BA
Responsible individual	Pamela Allen
Registered manager	Suzanna Claire Hills
Date of last inspection	09/01/2014

Inspection date	06/05/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are well cared for at this home by staff who support and encourage them to achieve their potential both socially and educationally. This has resulted in some very positive outcomes for young people who are now more confident in their outlook on life and their future.

There is an inclusive culture at the home. Young people are encouraged to take an ownership of the decisions made about their care and individual plans. They influence the day-to-day life of the home and their views are taken seriously by staff. This encourages a sense of responsibility among young people. There is a very warm and positive relationship between young people and the staff. This helps to maintain a calm and welcoming atmosphere. The behaviour of young people is good and restraints are rare. This is something staff are very proud of.

The home provides young people with a safe, stable environment to live. Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and these combined with robust policies ensure young people are protected from harm. However, a shortfall has been identified in the updated training of some staff in fire safety and safeguarding.

The manager has been in post for a short period. There has been some staff sickness which has proved to be challenging in the day-to-day operations at the

home. Nevertheless, the manager demonstrates strong leadership skills and is committed to ensuring that the home is functioning efficiently.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is provided by a local authority and is registered to care for up to six young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
09/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
10/09/2013	Full	good
14/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
21/06/2012	Full	good

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and specifically that staff undertake updated training in fire safety and safeguarding. (NMS 18.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make significant progress in developing their self-confidence. They have previously experienced abuse and neglect and when initially admitted to the children's home their trust in adults was low. Through the dedicated involvement of the staff the young people are now more confident and have a much improved self-esteem about themselves. For example, some young people have learned how to play a musical instrument and this has helped them to become more confident in their abilities. Other young people now chair their statutory reviews. One young person said, 'I chair my review meetings, before I would not have been confident enough to do this.' An independent reviewing officer commented, 'I am so impressed with the way the staff have worked with the young people to bring about the best in them.' The social and emotional benefits for young people are clearly evident. This has helped them to be more confident when going out into the community and meeting other adults.

Young people's health has improved through the support and encouragement of staff. Young people are provided with appropriate advice and guidance from health service professionals and as a result they now enjoy a healthier life style. For example, eating healthy balanced meals, taking better care of their personal hygiene and taking part in physical activities such as walking in the countryside, swimming and going to the gym. All young people are provided with a free pass to attend the gym. The home has a scheme known as 'Healthy Stars.' This enables young people to gain stars when engaging in physical activities that promote good health. The stars can be traded for shopping vouchers.

Young people do well educationally. They are achieving academically within their respective capabilities. This contrasts significantly with their previous experience when none of the young people attended any form of educational provision. Those of school age are attending full time education. One young person said, 'I don't really like going to school but I know I have to if I am to get in to college.' Staff engage positively with young people to bring about a change in attitude towards their education. This is achieved through persistence and support. This means that the young people now have the opportunity to gain qualifications which will improve their future employment prospects.

Young people learn how to care for themselves as part of their journey towards independence. Staff work closely with the pathway team. This ensures young people are given the best chance of success in preparing for the time when they move into their own accommodation.

The relationships between some young people and their families have improved through positive contact arrangements. This promotes the prospects of stronger links

with their families.

The incidence of risk-taking and offending by the young people is much reduced. This is attributed to the strong trusting relationships developed between the young people and staff. This means that young people now have a better understanding of the risks that is involved in offending and how this can affect their futures.

A visiting professional said, 'Staff are doing a sterling job' and 'Staff have a real grip of the situation involving the young people and work with them to achieve substantial outcomes.'

Quality of care

good

This home provides young people with a stable and structured place to live. The relationships between young people and staff are positive and this is clearly evident in the day-to-day interactions between them. The young people feel that staff are genuinely concerned about their wellbeing.

Staff work effectively with individual young people to bring about significant changes in their behaviour and outlook on life. For example, staff support the young people to value their education. They work closely with education professionals to prevent any risk of jeopardising a place. By working in partnership with the school, this positive approach has enabled some young people to maintain their place and to continue to benefit from the value of the education provided. Staff regard getting young people into, and keeping them in, full time education as significant achievement.

Young people are actively encouraged to make a positive contribution to the life of the home. For example, where to go on the annual holiday, trips out to places of interest, the décor of the home and the selection and appointment of staff. Young people have recently decided to reduce the time spent on long holidays in summer and replace this with short breaks. Staff support young people to be actively involved in their statutory reviews to ensure that they participate fully in all outcomes of reviews and key worker sessions. This gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility in the decisions made about their life in the home. Young people are actively involved in the Children's Council where they can influence wider decisions with the local authority relating to residential care.

Care plans are detailed and informative indicating the individual areas of work required to support and assist young people as they proceed along the journey towards independent living. These plans inform the key workers of the care needs of young people and strategies required to meet these needs. Young people are encouraged to take a key role in formulating their plans and to amend these as required. This is a good example of staff upholding the principles of equality and diversity. The progress of the young people is appropriately monitored through their statutory reviews. Independent reviewing officers (IRO) ensure that young people

are supported and encouraged to make a contribution to their care plans. This is a further example of the way the service is proactive in ensuring that young people take responsibility for key aspects of their lives.

Young people are able to benefit from a range of health care services. These enhance their wellbeing and emotional needs. The looked after children's nurse plays an important role ensuring that young people access health service resources such as the dentist, doctors and children and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) counselling. These resources promote the health of young people thereby improving the quality of their lives.

The home provides young people with access to activities. These range from cinema visits, shopping, trips out to places of interests and support for individual hobbies and interests. The home has the use of two cars to facilitate transport for young people to attend activities.

The home is located on the outskirts of a market town with close access to shops and other amenities. It is well maintained and has recently been decorated throughout giving a pleasant ambience. Young people enjoy having their own bedrooms. These are suitably furnished where they can have private time. The home provides young people with a safe and comfortable place to live where they benefit from the care of dedicated staff.

Keeping children and young people safe good

All staff are clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding issues for each young person is discussed by staff at shift handover and supervision meetings. This reflects the importance attached by the staff to ensuring the safety of young people. This is further enhanced through the robust staff recruitment and selection process. This requires a full detailed assessment and checks of all applicants for work. No appointment is confirmed until all checks are completed. These measures positively promote the safety of young people by preventing unsuitable adults from working at the home.

The case records for each young person contains good quality risk assessments identifying any safeguarding concerns. These are regularly updated by key workers. The information is clearly set out enabling staff to respond to any concerns as these occur.

There has been a reduction in young people going missing due to the trust and confidence they have built up with staff. Bullying is not currently an issue at the home. Young people have formed good friendships and this is reflected in the low incidence of tensions between them. Although staff are trained in behaviour management, restraint is not a common feature at the home. Young people respond positively to staff when issues about their behaviour are raised.

Staff have established good relationships with the local police. These positive links provide staff with access to the police for advice and guidance on any issues of concern. Additionally, police officers spend time with those young people who are at risk of exploitation by older adults in the community. This helps to promote a more positive awareness among young people of the risks associated with forming unsuitable relationships with adults. The police additionally operate a system known as 'safe and well' whereby they visit the home whenever a young person who has been missing returns. This ensures that the safety of the young people is promoted and monitored.

The building is physically safe and well maintained. All fire safety procedures have been correctly carried out and equipment fully checked by authorised professionals.

Leadership and management

good

A Registered Manager is in post. The staff team adopt a positive approach to their work. They are enthusiastic advocates for young people. There is a strong emphasis among staff for improving the life chances of the young people who come from disruptive backgrounds. Staff are supported through formal supervision and day-to-day oversight by the manager. Training and development opportunities for staff are available with access to both internal and external training courses. This promotes the knowledge and competences of staff who work in a challenging environment. However, some staff have not completed updated training in fire safety and safeguarding. The home is fully staffed and appropriate measures are in place to cover for current staff sickness. This ensures that the home maintains a safe and managed environment for young people.

Appropriate steps have been taken by the manager to comply with a requirement and two recommendations made at the last inspection. The requirement related to updating the children's guide to the home. This has been completed. The recommendations centred on ensuring that young people are seen by an independent adult following their return to the home after going missing, and that staff undertake training in self harm awareness. Both recommendations have been completed. This demonstrates a capacity to improve.

The effectiveness of the home is appropriately monitored each month in line with the regulations by an independent visitor. The reports give an indication of the operations at the home and the views of young people about life at this setting.

The records maintained at the home give a clear account of the progress and experiences of young people. These are well maintained and young people are encouraged by staff to regularly read their reports and to make any amendments as required. This is good practice and gives young people the responsibility for their records.

The Statement of Purpose sets out the services provided at the home. This is complemented by the guide that is given to all young people on arrival at the home. This is a colourful child friendly document which provides young people with information about the home and expectations of them as residents.

Staff work in partnership with other services to ensure that young people have their care needs met in the widest sense. This is demonstrated through the close working arrangements with other statutory services both within and outside of the local authority.

The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the home. This means that young people can enjoy a stable environment and thereby increase their life opportunities as they move towards adulthood.

The manager provides strong effective leadership and direction for the staff.

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.