

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	10 December 2009
Inspector	Russell Shackford
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	3 July 2009
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 service is a residential school that accommodates young people aged eight to 17 years who have complex needs and severe learning difficulties, including autism. As a school providing over 295 days of residential care per year the whole school is registered as a Children's Home. It is situated in a rural village approximately five miles away from the local town centre.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection to check on key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe. This is a good service. Young people's privacy is respected and complaints are well handled. Good policies and practice promote and protect young people's welfare. Behaviour management is good. Unnecessary risks are, so far as possible eliminated during known and likely activities. Good policies and procedures help to protect young people's physical safety in the event of a fire at the home. Staff recruitment checks are satisfactory. All staff are trained in appropriate safety subjects including complaints, child protection, physical restraint and fire safety.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no actions raised at the last inspection. It was recommended that the registered person make improvements to staff qualifications. The organisation continues to provide staff with time and support to help ensure a minimum of 80% of care staff have the required National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 care award or equivalent qualification. However, the target remains unmet.

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.

Staff demonstrate good understanding of facilitating privacy for the young people. This is done sensitively and safely using plans of care that are agreed by a multi disciplinary team before being written up, implemented and reviewed. This is a notable area of strength. Details about young people's care is recorded and stored appropriately to maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality. Young people have access to a private telephone which is free to use for reasonable periods. This ensures that young people's privacy is respected and the payment method is convenient.

All staff have received training on complaints to ensure that they know what to do if there is a complaint about the service. Staff have explained the procedure and there is also information in the young people's guide about how to complain. A symbol based communication aid specific to young people's concerns or worries is available in the home. Details of external agencies are displayed clearly. The young people also have the support of an independent advocacy service. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are well handled.

The managers and staff have received child protection training, and the provider has very good safeguarding systems and procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. An independent safeguard forum is maintained and independent safeguard visitors are employed to report on the young people's safety and welfare. Safeguarding is discussed as a standing agenda item at monthly multi disciplinary team meetings. The care managers have established strong links with the local safeguarding team and they liaise closely to promote and protect young people's welfare. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the young people's safety. Therefore, the welfare of young people is promoted, they are protected from abuse, bullying and unauthorised absence, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. This is a notable area of strength.

All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted.

Behaviour management policies and practices are good and staff are trained in the content of these. The implementation of different behaviour management training is monitored and regular reviews of the impact upon outcomes for young people take place. This includes opportunities for staff to be reflective. The records include details of the differing incremental techniques employed before the last resort of physical restraint is used. Staff are supported by the provision of clearly recorded behaviour management plans. These plans are intensively reviewed by a multi disciplinary team who offer well designed, progressive strategies for staff to implement.

Reducing unnecessary risks to young people is a high priority at the home. Written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each young person during their known and likely activities. These are reviewed regularly.

All staff and young people have been involved in regular fire drills. All staff working at the home have received up to date fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. The fire safety check records are up to date and accurate. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is adequately protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable criminal records bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. Young people are invited to take part in the recruitment process and their views are seriously considered in the outcome.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation continues to provide staff with time and support to help ensure a minimum of 80% of care staff have the required NVQ at level 3 care award or equivalent qualification. However, the target remains unmet.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure a minimum of 80% of care staff have the appropriate NVQ at level 3 care award or equivalent qualification. (NMS 29)