

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036584
Inspector	Michelle Spruce
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Chief Executive & Town Clerks Department PO Box 15 WALSALL WS1 1TP
Responsible individual	Alison Cooper
Registered manager	Jason Keith Grainger
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	29/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good service that improves outcomes and provides good quality care to young people. The key strengths lie in the dedicated commitment staff have to improving outcomes for young people in their care. Coupled with joint working and good communication with external services, the service continues to provide good quality care.

Young people are safe in the home they live in and demonstrate this through their behaviour. Missing from home episodes have significantly reduced, there is no use of physical intervention and young people's behaviour is socially acceptable.

Relationships are strong and based on mutual trust and respect. Staff lead by example and provide young people with good role models that provide continuity in their daily care. Young people take an active part in giving their views and opinions about the management of the care they are provided with. The home reflects their choices and personalities.

The manager leads a dedicated team and knows and understands their strengths and weaknesses. There are some shortfalls to the service and as a result, three requirements and three recommendations have been made.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a borough council.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
29/08/2013	Full	adequate
24/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
02/08/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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
22 (2001)	ensure that electronic or mechanical monitoring devices for the surveillance of children are not used in a children's home except for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children accommodated in the children's home. In relation to the use of CCTV cameras (Regulation 22(a-d))	30/09/2014
33 (2001)	ensure the independent person, when carrying out a visit, shall interview parents, relatives and persons working at the children's home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded and their	30/09/2014

	wellbeing promoted (Regulation 33(8)(i)(ii))	
34 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months. (Regulation 34(1)(a))	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home implements a proportionate approach to any risk assessment. In relation to sleeping arrangements for young people and staff during off site holiday activities (NMS 4.5)
- ensure children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning. In relation to internet access and equipment (NMS 8.2)
- ensure information about the child is recorded in a way which will be helpful to the child when they access their files now or in the future (NMS 22.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in education. Some young people who did not attend school or college are now engaging in placement opportunities. Others benefit from achieving 100% attendance. A young person said, 'I never used to attend; I have improved my education'. Another young person said, 'School is good.'

Young people are fit and well. They know and understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. A young person said, 'I use my bike to get around'. They take part in planning, shopping and cooking food. Menus reflect their individual choices and preferences. This provides young people with a well-balanced diet that keeps them healthy. Routine health appointments are regularly attended. Additional or specialist health services are also accessed where needed. This helps young people to maintain good physical, emotional and psychological well-being. A young person said, 'My health has improved; I walk to the shop and to the bus stop'.

Young people benefit from contact with those who are significant in their lives. They have friends who often visit them at the home. Strong bonds are formed as a result of the improved contact. A young person said, 'I see my family and have unsupervised contact'.

Young people take pride in their appearance and have a good sense of who they are and where they originate from. They choose their own clothes that reflect their individual taste and personality. During the inspection a young person had a visit from the hairdresser. This helps young people to maintain a good self-image and improves their confidence in their appearance.

Young people work towards independence at a pace that is tailored to their own capabilities. Some young people are preparing for leaving care and getting ready for independent living. Social skills are embedded into everyday life and young people work towards independence by taking responsibility for everyday tasks such as managing money, using public transport and maintaining the cleanliness of their bedrooms and the home they live in. This helps them to be better prepared for moving on and leaving care.

Quality of care **good**

Young people's views about the home they live in and the care they receive are sought and taken into account. Young people are provided with an advocate's support to ensure their voice is independently heard. A young person said, 'My advocate helped me'. Staff give young people the opportunity to meet on a regular

basis and have 'circle time'. This meeting allows young people the freedom to share their thoughts and feelings and raise concerns. Young people feel listened to because staff act on their wishes.

Staff are consistent in their approach to supporting education. They attend meetings and help with homework. Young people know staff want the best for them and they engage with staff to improve their education and job prospects. A young person said, 'I want a permanent job'. However, resources that are required by young people to assist them in accessing jobs on-line are not readily available. A young person said, 'I can't access the internet to look for job opportunities'. This limits young people's opportunities to look for work independently.

Relationships are strong and based on mutual trust and respect. All young people get on well with each other and staff. Staff have a clear understanding of the diverse needs of each individual and are sensitive in addressing their needs. For example, staff noticed a young person needed a haircut. A specialist hairdresser was found and arrangements were made to dress her hair in the way she is accustomed. This gives young people a sense of identity while respecting their culture.

Young people know how to complain and use the system when necessary. This helps young people to confidently seek support to address their concerns and grumbles. As a result, their rights are promoted and their voice is heard.

The home is beautifully decorated and maintained to high standard. This gives a warm welcoming feeling to the environment and is reflective of the young people's choices.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people feel safe and protected in the home. Some young people place themselves at risk when they go missing from home despite the efforts by staff to protect them. These episodes have significantly reduced because staff work hard to understand the triggers of behaviour that result in missing episodes. They work in partnership with the police to ensure young people are found and returned quickly. This keeps young people safe.

Physical intervention is not used in the home. Young people's behaviour is managed well because staff understand their individual struggles and how to support them effectively. For example, reward systems are in place to offer incentives for positive behaviour. Sanctions are enforced when behaviour is deemed unacceptable. A young person said, 'Sanctions are fair'.

Security cameras monitor the home. Cameras are used to survey the front of the home's driveway, and the communal areas at the back of the garden. There are no agreements with the local authority that identify in young people's placement plans

that they are at such risk that electronic surveillance is necessary. This means the privacy of young people is compromised because the home captures images of all young people that use the communal garden area.

Safety measures are in place when young people take part in activities in and out of the home. Risk assessments identify areas of risk and indicate how the risk will be reduced. However, not all activities are evaluated to protect the safety of young people. For example, young people went on holiday and needed arrangements for sleeping accommodation. Young people were consulted about where they were going to sleep and were happy with the arrangements. But a risk assessment was not completed prior to the holiday to clearly outline the sleeping arrangements to protect the privacy of young people and staff. This has the potential to impact on the vulnerability of young people.

Visitors to the home are greeted by staff and asked for identification to verify who they are. This makes sure young people are protected from potentially unsafe adults. Staff are fully vetted before they begin working at the home. All relevant checks are completed to prevent unsuitable candidates having access to vulnerable young people. This keeps them safe.

Health and safety monitoring takes place regularly to ensure the home is compliant with regulation. Fire drills and equipment tests are completed to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of a fire. This keeps everyone living and working at the home safe in the event of a fire evacuation.

Leadership and management

adequate

The service benefits from a Registered Manager who has been in position since June 2014. The manager has 12 years' experience in children's services and is undertaking the Diploma level 5. Additionally, there is a strong team of staff who support the leadership in the operation of the home and contribute effectively to the quality of care young people receive.

Staff are provided with good supervisory support and training that assists their development. Training enhances their skill and knowledge to ensure they continue to meet the needs of young people.

Monthly monitoring of the home is completed by an independent person who shares reports with the manager. The independent person does not gain the views of parents or other stakeholders consistently in line with Regulation 33. This means the manager is not fully informed to evaluate the service the home provides.

The manager completes his own monitoring and provides Ofsted with a quarterly report. The report does not address all the matters in Schedule 6. This means the review of the quality of care is not completed to the standard required by the

Regulations.

Records are kept secure and confidential. Information is protected against unauthorised personnel having access to it because it is kept under lock and key. Some information about young people is not always recorded on their records. For example, when external professionals visit the home and speak to staff about young people, staff do not routinely keep records of these discussions about young people or the action agreed to support them. This is not helpful for young people who may access their records in the future. Good intervention and support is lost due to the poor record keeping in this area.

The statement of purpose is up to date, reflects the current arrangements of the service and any changes are notified in line with Regulations. Staff and social workers know and understand the ethos of the home and the service it offers. This means young people are provided with a home that meets their needs.

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.