

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036917
Inspector	Angus Mackay
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Registered person address	Children's Services, The Woolwich Centre 35 Wellington Street LONDON SE18 6HQ
Responsible individual	Andrew O'Sullivan
Registered manager	Deborah Forde
Date of last inspection	05/03/2014

Inspection date	04/06/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is managed by a highly creative team who are constantly striving for measured improvement in the care of the young people. They are in the process of embedding new recording systems to support their structured, planned improvements in the home and in the care of the young people. The staff team is suitably diverse, well trained and highly motivated. Young people form excellent attachments with staff enabling them to engage positively in a range of developmental activities. One young person said of the home, 'Anyone who lives here is lucky it is like a home. If I were Ofsted I would give them outstanding!'

Managers maintain a dynamic development plan for the home which is regularly updated following the detailed internal and external monitoring of the service. The home are aware that the statement of purpose requires updating and that the quarterly report on the conduct of the home should be sent to HMCI. These reports were forwarded to HMCI during the inspection.

Staff and young people have excellent relationships. The home develops strong links with families and provide ongoing care and support to young people when they move on. Ex residents are encouraged to remain positively involved in the home providing exceptional role models to the current young people. Young people have a strong role in the management of the service including recruitment of staff;

exercising influence in meetings; choice of décor; choice of menu. The manager is always looking to increase the positive voice of the young people in the service.

The home is comfortable and well maintained internally although the exterior and garden requires some attention. One young person said of it, 'When I heard the children's home name I used to think of that ugly building around the corner from my school. Now when I hear it's name I think of home.'

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides short and medium-term residential care for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural problems. The home also undertakes outreach work with young people, either to prevent the need for accommodation, or to support them and their carers once they have left the home. This service is provided by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/03/2014	Interim	good progress
09/10/2013	Full	good
27/02/2013	Interim	good progress
01/03/2012	Interim	good progress

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
5 (2001)	ensure you review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and the children's guide and notify HMCI of any revision within 28 days (Regulation 5(a)(b))	29/08/2014
34 (2001)	supply to HMCI a report in respect of the review conducted monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months. (Regulation 34(2))	30/06/2014

Recommendations

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

- endeavour to take account of the views of children the service is providing for when conducting annual staff appraisals (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that the home is well maintained in particular that external paint work maintained in good condition and grass is regularly cut. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people involve themselves in a wide range of activities. For example dance, football training and gymnasium membership. During free time, young people often prefer to socialise with friends rather than take part in activities with the home. However the young people say they have pamper nights, cinema trips, music nights, arts and crafts sessions ,go to ice skating, and play board games with others in the home. The young people say they have friends stay overnight at the home or join them on trips out like the recent trip to Thorpe Park theme park. The young people improve relationships, sustain attachments, enhance social skills, develop new interests, gain in confidence and have a lot of fun through this.

All young people are engaged in education programmes and are improving in their attendance and achievement. All the young people have aspirations to progress from school to college and recognise that they have to achieve in their current studies to enable this to happen. Education attainment is highly variable with the young people as is their attendance at school. However all are making some progress in attendance and achievement. One social worker commented, 'Attendance at school in the last couple of years had been terrible. Before coming here the young person was very difficult to engage, went late and disrupted lessons. Since coming to the home they get up and go in regularly. In the past six months there has been a huge improvement with no behavioural problems.' Young people are gradually improving their engagement in education.

Young people maintain contact with their home communities and cultural background. They use keyworker sessions to explore cultural or religious issues of interest to them. They meet with their families and staff support visits from parents to the home. The young people say that they have as much contact as they wish. Young people have friends visit and this occurred during the inspection. They say that friends can stay overnight, if they plan it, or join in activities with them. Young people are aware of the expectations about these visits and accept that they must ensure good behaviour during these contacts. The young people are gradually developing positive relationships with others and are sustaining positive relationships.

Young people engaged in high risk behaviours prior to coming to the home respond positively to the boundaries in the home and the positive incentive schemes. Young people show reductions in instances of going missing and engaging in alcohol or drug abuse. One social worker said, 'Before coming here there was drug taking, aggression in the community and going missing. At home there were no boundaries. The young person has responded well to the structure of the home., I think they were craving these boundaries.' All the young people have reduced or totally stopped instances of going missing and criminal behaviour. A police officer said, 'There are no community issues with this home. We have received no complaints from neighbours about them.

When we visit we see a good rapport between kids and staff.'

Young people make significant progress in developing healthy relationships and attachments. Some young people enjoy good relationships from stable families and develop these relationships from a sound base in the home. They use keyworker sessions to explore issues affecting them such as identity and their place in the family. One social worker said, 'The young person is making progress and has changed as an individual. They are no longer presenting the problems which led them to being in care. The support from the home has been tremendous. The young person has developed good relationships with the staff allowing them to open up about issues from childhood.' Where applicable young people use this confidence to engage in therapeutic sessions with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). One ex resident visiting the home said, 'When I was living there I changed from being a difficult child into a responsible adult.'

Young people have a significant say in the running of the home. They use keyworker sessions, young people's meetings or direct contact with the staff to discuss ideas they have. Young people say they create the menu, with staff aiding in suggesting healthy options. In addition they choose the décor in their rooms and have a say in the overall décor of the home. Recently young people have been invited to attend the end part of staff team meetings, increasing their influence in decisions and providing them with current information on the policies and procedures in the home. Young people develop a sense of responsibility and ownership of the home through these engagements. In addition they practice skills of negotiation, compromise and assertion in a safe environment.

Quality of care

outstanding

Staff transmit their high aspirations for young people in their positive application of detailed care plans. There is a strong focus on achievement and support to enable them to engage successfully in education. One ex resident visiting during the inspection said, 'The staff here inspired me to do what I have done and go to University. I now want to work in childcare or as an Ofsted inspector.'

Managers carefully risk assess all new applications ensuring that the individual will benefit from living in the home and that the existing young people will not be adversely affected. The home provides outreach care to some young people and their families ensuring that they can remain at home. In addition they provide outreach care to young people who have recently left. One young person commented, 'When I left they still gave me support. They would come around to my flat and check my fridge that everything was in date. This does not feel like a children's home it is more like a family.' Due to staff control on admissions the home is able to provide a positive service to children with a wide range of complex issues.

Ex residents are encouraged to remain involved in the home. Following rigorous

recruitment and training some are involved in providing a mentoring service within the home. They are also inducted into recruitment panels improving the safe selection of new staff. Young people in the home are inspired by these young people and see real evidence of the depth of care provided by the home. The young people gain in confidence, improve verbal skills and show exceptional improvement in their positive self view. Young people in the home benefit from the engagement of these excellent role models.

The home is bright cheerful with many photographs of young people around the building, evidencing the home's celebration of their achievements. The interior of the home is well looked after and comfortably furnished.

Medication is safely stored and issued to young people. Staff maintain clear records on appointments and health targets for young people. All young people are registered with a general practitioner and all have parental agreements to receive medical treatment, homely remedies and first aid. Where young people are reluctant to take medication staff monitor their health carefully and take appropriate actions to ensure they receive professional assistance.

Staff have excellent relationships with other agencies including police, schools, social workers and CAMHS. The neighbourhood policing service said, 'It is a home, highly rated by us, that works well with us.' Police say they are welcome in the home and work with young people engaging them in positive initiatives such as training sessions with the local football league club. Education services work closely with the school ensuring that all young people receive education if they are excluded from school. One provider said of the home, 'Staff are very welcoming and work well to support our educational programme. They are unbelievably professional and respectful towards the young people. They show a lot of understanding of the psychological issues.' Where the home do not have all of the relevant information they are excellent at pursuing this.

Staff work with young people and their families to enable them to return home and enhancing social contacts. Social workers, independent reviewing officers (IROs) and young people praise the work done. This enables young people and parents to safely explore their own roles in past events and allow young people to safely share emotions. One IRO said, '(the mother) is very positive about the home and is positive about the work they do with her child.'

Staff are creative in the activities they provide for young people. One young person said, 'They make sure they spot what you are interested in, any hobbies. If you have a hobby they make sure you can do it. They go out of their way to do things they know will make you happy not just to help you sort your problems.'

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people say they feel safe in the home. In discussion a group of young people said, 'It is good here, it is safe and it is fun.' The young people say that they are confident in talking to staff about personal issues.

The staff team is highly diverse and skilled in child care enabling them to meet the diverse needs of the young people. They are all trained in safeguarding and child protection and use this training positively in their work. They also attend advanced training courses including safeguarding children across culture and faith, mental health first aid and suicide first aid. Staff also receive regular information from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) ensuring they are aware of current issues in safeguarding children. This information and training provides staff with a broader awareness of issues which affect the young people and their families and skills in how to spot emerging problems and facilitate early professional interventions. Consequently young people receive skilled assistance in reducing high risk behaviours.

Young people live in a safe environment which is subject to regular monitoring by staff. Staff, with delegated responsibilities for health and safety issues, are appropriately trained and monitor all identified risks in the home. For example fridge and freezer temperatures are recorded daily; water temperature is monitored; water purity testing is conducted; asbestos risk assessments are maintained; and fire drills are recorded in detail. Staff maintain and monitor comprehensive risk assessments which are updated as required. For example the fire risk assessment was being updated during the inspection. These measures ensure young people live in an environment where risks are clearly identified and protective measures are put in place to enhance safety.

Staff work well with young people, families and social workers to construct clear care plans, 24 hour behavioural plans and structured risk assessments. The current risk assessment model is being reviewed by the management team to provide a more flexible model, providing outcome measures for young people. Staff interactions with young people are guided by their application of the homes theoretical model, a social cognitive theory approach. Staff reinforce desired behaviours through praise and recognition of young people's positives in any situation. All staff are trained and skilled in the application of the model. Consequently there have been few restraints or serious incidents since the last inspection.

Staff have consulted with relevant bodies including the police in reviewing and modifying their missing child policy. Through staff diligent application of their protective practices the instances of young people going missing has reduced dramatically. Young people's safety is improved by staff application of protective measures reducing instances of them going missing in the community.

The home is well managed by an experienced, well qualified and progressive management team. Since the last inspection the registered manager has been seconded, on other duties within the council, for four days a week. The home has been effectively managed by an experienced deputy but this has led to some delays in implementing planned changes, updating procedures and supplying all required information to HMCI. For example the statement of purpose has not been updated to show recent changes in the staff team. The management team provide excellent support and planned guidance to the team enabling them to meet the complex needs of the young people. One member of staff said, 'The management team are brilliant; they are very supportive and create a great atmosphere. I am very happy here.'

At the last inspection there were no recommendations and no requirements. Managers have kept up to date with changes in legislation and have begun reviewing policies, procedures and systems to meet these changes. Some changes have been completed and some are in progress and were examined during the inspection. Changes to ways of working show consultation with relevant bodies within the council and in the local community.

Managers have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home detailed in their development and improvement plan. The development plan is an active document which is updated regularly, following manager's monthly analysis of achievement of the improvement targets. Currently managers are conducting a skills audit with staff to review their current competency and plan for their ongoing development. The management team produce quarterly reports on their monitoring of the home in line with regulation and their improvement of the care provided to young people. The management team have used this information positively improving the care of young people for example reducing the instances of young people missing from care. However these reports have not regularly been sent to HMCI to aid the regulator in monitoring progress.

External monitoring reports are; detailed; challenging; engage young people and parents; regularly submitted to HMCI in a timely manner. The home are aware that these reports must now be conducted by someone who is not employed in connection with the carrying on of social services functions. The current arrangements for visits to the home has not impacted negatively on the young people due to the rigour of the scrutiny of records and diligence in reporting the comments of young people and their families.

The home has good relationships with neighbours and the local community. A member of the police safer neighbourhood team commented, 'They are a very highly rated home. There are no community issues with the home and our police community support officer (PCSO) has a good relationship with staff and kids in the home.' The management team attend meetings of the safer neighbourhood committee which provides them with information on any potential threats to young people in the community. The manager is aware of the requirement to complete a

review of the location of the home and has devised a format for consultation. Police confirm that they remain positive about the current arrangements for the provision of child care from this setting.

Staff training and development is excellent providing staff with the necessary skills to work with a highly diverse group of young people. All staff are trained to a minimum of level 3 and good succession planning ensures that more advanced qualifications are supported. All staff receive regular high quality supervision and annual appraisal. The manager has a monthly meeting with each young person to gain their views on the home and their progress. These meetings include discussions about staff but the manager has not yet formally recorded the young people's views for use in annual appraisals.

The home is generally well maintained and staff push to ensure that all repairs are speedily dealt with. The interior is well cared for and maintenance records show a reasonable response to reported issues. However the exterior has areas with flaking paint and uncut grass. The home has evidence of following up these issues. This has not impacted on the safe care of young people but it does not support the positive culture and respect for the environment in the young people created by 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.