

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037256
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House Russell Road IPSWICH IP1 2BX
Responsible individual	Clifford Martin James
Registered manager	POST VACANT / Anthony William Gill
Date of last inspection	13/03/2014

Inspection date	04/12/2014
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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	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people's care is planned well and incorporates their diverse needs and choices supporting them to develop as individuals. Staff are dedicated and genuine; they provide personalised care in a warm parenting style encouraging young people to form good attachments.

Young people are happy with the care they receive and speak positively about the home. They benefit from a nurturing home environment and consistent boundaries. This helps them feel stable and secure.

Young people feel safe at the home. Staff work well with arrange of professionals to teach young people about personal safety. There is an overall decrease in risk taking behaviours.

The new manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. He is making an analysis of the value it provides for young people and looking for ways to improve. The inspection identified one shortfall in relation to hazards to young people. Supervision and risk assessment records have also been raised as areas for improvement.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for seven young people from the age of 11 to 18 years old. The home looks after young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is owned by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/03/2014	Interim	good progress
17/12/2013	Full	good
25/02/2013	Interim	good progress
31/08/2012	Full	good

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
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health or safety (Regulation 23 (a))	31/12/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff are provided with regular supervision (19.4)

- ensure that staff are all aware of and alert to any signs or symptoms that might indicate a child is at risk of harm. This relates to inaccurate information in risk assessments (NMS 4.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress at the home. They benefit from fundamental attachments to key staff and this helps them build trust and develop healthy relationships. One young person said; 'I like it here and I like the staff. I feel safe here, we do disagree but staff always sort it out.'

Young people engage well with staff and other professionals to address their emotional and psychological issues. This helps them address the difficulties they face and accept their vulnerabilities.

Young people are supported to have regular contact with significant adults, peers and family members. They have built up boxes of memorable items to enable them to visualise significant events and family members. This helps young people build an understanding of their family histories and backgrounds.

Young people are actively encouraged to make choices in the home. Staff listen to young people's views and support their choices wherever safe and possible. One young person said; 'My bedroom is lovely, I chose the room, I have a key and it's been painted my colours.'

Young people are offered a range of activities, holiday choices and local celebratory events. This helps them develop their interests and gives them new opportunities.

Young people acquire skills that will support their independence such as managing a budget, shopping and cooking. This builds confidence in the development of self-care skills and gives young people some autonomy. Staff are flexible and supportive in helping young people acquire new skills. This supports young people towards their adult lives and independence.

Quality of care **good**

Staff work with young people on equal terms, they listen to their views and accommodate their individual choices where possible. Staff are warm and tactile helping young people feel wanted and nurtured. Staff arrange quality one to one time with young people offering opportunities for young people to talk, enjoy outings or benefit from individual time with an adult. A small team of staff are allocated to each young person providing a clear focus on their progress and addressing the barriers they face. This promotes a consistent approach in response to young people's requests.

Staff actively promote young people's meetings. Agenda items are evenly balanced between house rules and choices about activities, trips and holidays. This encourages young people's participation.

Staff actively support young people to make their views known, make complaints and grumble about the home. The system is user friendly and responsive. Replies are personalised and meaningful and this encourages young people to have a voice in the home.

Staff support young people to take part in activities that help them to develop their skills. Young people go horse-riding, enjoy cooking and art and craft activities. This helps young people identify their strengths and learn new skills.

The cook liaises well with young people to discuss their culinary likes and dislikes. Food is freshly prepared from raw ingredients. Staff and young people sit around the table every day, helping young people develop social skills and meal time etiquette. Menus are balanced well to incorporate healthy options with favourite dishes, giving young people a well-balanced diet.

Staff fully support young people to attend education; they work closely with the looked after children's education support services (LACESS). Working closely with professionals addresses barriers and provides incentives for young people. Staff provide packed lunches, transport and good homework support. Staff regularly speak to school staff and attend meetings at schools. This active approach helps staff monitor young people's progress and acknowledge their efforts and achievement.

The home is spacious and appointed well to meet young people's needs. Communal rooms are homely and welcoming. Bedrooms are highly personalised and nicely kept showing that young people value their personal space. Some of the ground floor door surrounds are undergoing work by external building contractors. One door surround has been exposed to brick following the removal of plaster and left without completion. This is unsightly and presents a potential hazard to young people.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are relaxed and comfortable in using all areas of the home. They say that they feel safe. There are some disagreements; however, generally young people live alongside one another amicably.

Risk assessments determine risks to each young person; however one of the risk assessments sampled is inaccurate and contradicts the young person's profile. These have been developed as an incentive for young people to measure progress in reducing risk taking behaviours. However, this is not an accurate record of associated risks and could cause confusion and compromise young people's safety.

The number of incidents of young people going missing from the home peaked in

October 2014 and has since reduced. There are young people who go missing at times and are at risk of negative peer influences outside the home. Staff are working well with the police and social workers to reduce these incidents and keep young people safe. This ensures that staff and police respond quickly to individuals in relation to their vulnerability.

Staff have good relationships with young people built on strong rapport and trust. Staff are calm and united providing a consistent and clear approach. This helps young people understand the boundaries. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the behaviour is managed well. Physical interventions are very rarely used. There are two incidents in last two years. These were a proportionate and necessary to ensure the safety of young people.

When staff are recruited, appropriate checks are submitted to ensure their suitability. Written references are obtained prior to staff taking up post and verified by telephone discussions. This prevents unsuitable adults working in the children's home.

The staff are confident about the procedures for managing allegations of abuse and reporting disclosures from young people. Staff benefit from regular training and this ensures safeguarding procedures are central to practice. Staff are confident in their knowledge of how to safeguard young people.

The home is mainly safe and adequately secure. Visitors sign in and are supervised while in the home. Health and safety checks are undertaken and young people practise regular fire evacuations. However, superficial building works have been left uncompleted and the risk assessments have not been shared with the manager or staff. Therefore the management of this risk is unclear and this presents a potential hazard to young people.

Leadership and management

good

The manager's post has been vacant since September 2014. A new manager was appointed in October 2014 and is undergoing the registration process. The manager is supported by the head of care who provides regular support and visits to the home.

The overall performance of the home has been maintained throughout the change in managers. The new manager has made a smooth transition in taking over the management of the home and leading the staff team. He understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans to improve identified areas. The manager has a clear vision for the home and is forming an analysis with the staff to contribute to a development plan for the home.

There have been no external complaints about the home.

The staff team work well together under the new manager. Training is good and staff are equipped with practice knowledge for their roles. Staff say that they feel supported. However, supervision provided for staff has been intermittent, meaning a number of staff have periods without supervision. This could compromise the quality of care provided to young people.

The manager and staff are clear about young people's progress. Prolife summaries of each young person show that living at the home has provided stability and emotional security for young people. Social workers reiterate this and young people are aware that being at the home has helped them progress.

The quality of records is generally good. Care planning is detailed and records are stored securely. The manager has notified all required parties of events in the home. Good details and updates are submitted to Ofsted without delay, providing a transparent overview of events in the home.

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.