

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037281
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	Serena Emberley
Date of last inspection	12/03/2014

Inspection date	18/09/2014
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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	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are settled and happy in the home. They have established strong attachments with staff, giving them stability and security. Young people say they feel safe, this is confirmed by feedback from parents and professionals.

Staff are firm and consistent in their approach to behaviour management in the home helping young people feel cared for and secure.

There have been no concerns reported to Ofsted about this home.

The manager has a realistic awareness of the strengths of the home and the areas for improvement. The quality of care remains extremely good while record keeping and management tasks require improvement. This has resulted in some shortfalls being raised again. These include; a lack of detail in restraint records and gaps in the supervision record. The manager has failed to notify Ofsted of a significant event and the numbers of staff on duty at weekends are low. The minor shortfalls identified are; encouraging young people's domestic skills and ensuring that décor throughout the home is of a good standard.

The regulatory shortfalls do not detract from the good quality care and young people's safety is not compromised. Staffing ratios in the home have led to time

constraints contributing to some of the shortfalls. The management team make the necessary adjustments to hours to resolve this.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides medium and long-term placements for up to seven young people who have emotional and or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2014	Interim	good progress
22/01/2014	Full	good
21/01/2013	Interim	good progress
11/10/2012	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
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30 (1))	19/09/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include all matters detailed in Regulation 17B (Regulation 17B (3) (a) (b) (e) (f))	19/09/2014
25	ensure that there is at all times, having regard to	31/10/2014

(2001)	the size of the children's home, the statement of purpose, and the number and needs (including any needs arising from any disability) of the children accommodated there, a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home. (Regulation 25 (1) (a))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure there is an electronic record kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision for each member of staff (NMS 19.5)
- encourage young people to develop practical skills, including shopping, buying, cooking and keeping food, washing clothes and contributing to domestic routines in the home (NMS 12.1 (e))
- ensure that the home is well maintained and decorated. (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home. (NMS 3.18)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people have built strong relationships with the staff. Generally young people live alongside one another amicably, although the group dynamics are lively and there are minor disagreements.

Young people are eager and confident to express their views in the knowledge staff listen and facilitate their choices where possible. Their preferences are evident in the décor, personal items around the home and resources. There is a colourful ambience to the house and young people's presence is tangible. Young people have chosen a superhero theme for the play room and new colours for the dining room. They contribute to menus and decide on trips for the summer holidays.

Young people maintain a healthy life style. They access a range of activities and events in the home and local community: these include after school rugby club, gymnastics, youth club and swimming. They enjoyed a summer camp and play on a wide range of garden play apparatus. Overall, young people benefit from active lifestyles and this keeps them healthy and fit.

Young people access a range of health services to promote good standards of physical wellbeing and support emotional and psychological issues. Planned therapeutic interventions support young people to understand their complex backgrounds and start to address their behaviours.

Young people are supported to see their families in line with their care plans. Young people make friends locally and are able to invite friends back to the home. This enables young people to make social connections outside the home.

All young people routinely attend school. They progress through the education system and many reintegrate into mainstream schools. There is an embedded culture and expectation of school attendance in the home and the individual progress and attainment made by some young people is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged to have positive involvement with the wider community in relation to activities and fostering good relationships within the neighbourhood. Young people organised a garden party for friends of the home. This was an enjoyable and successful afternoon that young people took care in organising. As a result young people felt confident in their abilities and pride in their home.

Opportunities for young people to help with household chores are limited. This means they are not always able to be actively involved in household routines. This does not fully support them to learn new domestic skills that will support them as they become

independent.

Quality of care

good

Staff have sustained lasting attachments with young people. Continuity of staff in the support of each individual has been pivotal in providing a holistic package of care for each child. One social worker said about staff, 'Their understanding and knowledge of children is second to none. They are informed, professional and help children to progress'.

Staff actively seek children's views. Meetings are held regularly and ideas from children are taken forward. Their views are reflected in décor, themed murals, choice of activities, trips and routines. Staff provide clear boundaries that are understood by the young people. Staff are consistent and follow through when young people challenge agreed rules. Young people are expected to sit at the table for meals, follow the evening settling routine and accept the consequences that accompany negative behaviours. Staff reinforce these guidelines and this helps young people feel safe and secure.

The group dynamics are generally good. Young people benefit from living communally with peers of similar ages. This makes routines within the home straightforward and conducive to healthy lifestyles and good attendance in school. Staff promote and support young people to attend education exceptionally well. Staff respond immediately to concerns raised in school. One member of staff said, 'We are passionate about education, we go the extra mile in fact we go above and beyond'. Attendance is excellent helping young people to feel positive about successful reintegration into school.

Staff encourage and support young people to attend a wide range of community activities that support their abilities and interests. This enables them to develop their talents and skills. Despite low staff ratios at times staff are adept at juggling competing demands to ensure that activity clubs are taken up and children can attend.

The large garden and house afford space without an institutional feel. There is ample space for communal living and young people's privacy. The atmosphere is cheerful and child friendly: evidence of toys, art work and young people's input is in abundance. However, there are areas of paint work that are tatty and the grass in the garden is unkempt.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people say that they feel safe in the knowledge that staff will always act on any concerns they raise. Their faith and trust in the staff helps them feel secure.

There are very few incidents that jeopardise young people's safety. Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours in the community and there are no incidents of young people going missing from the home.

Behaviour is generally good, all children attend school and have structured and productive routines. This supports smooth transition from home to school. Staff monitor tensions within the group. However, due to low numbers of staff on shift, they are unable to consistently oversee the dynamics within the group: this can result in occasional altercations where young people name call and play can become over boisterous. Staff actively challenge children and provide interventions to prevent unwanted behaviours. This includes physical restraint which staff use to ensure young people's immediate safety. Follow up work is good, although not recorded well. The record of restraints lacks details and does not build a picture of the behaviours leading to the incident. In addition the sanctions record has no evidence of children's views. The missing fields makes monitoring of these incidents difficult.

The recruitment processes are robust. The staff files demonstrate full checks on newly appointed staff to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

The safeguarding procedures in the home are clear. Staff understand their responsibilities to safeguard young people, monitor one another's practice and raise concerns. They know what to do in the event of an allegation or disclosure from a young person. This protects young people from potential harm.

The home is maintained well. Fire prevention equipment is checked regularly, fire drills are carried out and staff risk assess the physical environment. This means young people are protected from accidental injury and practise how to safely evacuate the home.

Leadership and management **adequate**

The home has an experienced well qualified manager; she was registered by Ofsted to manage this home in 2008. She demonstrates an unreserved commitment to the young people and strives exceptionally hard to improve the quality of young people's experiences. Capacity to improve the home is evident in providing individualised care and promoting education. Development plans link well to outcomes for children. The manager strives for each individual and ensures that they benefit from a rounded childhood experience that can be compared to a good family home.

There has been one complaint made to the home. The manager has satisfactorily resolved this.

Improvements made since the last inspection though do not address all the previous shortfalls. There continue to be issues about record keeping, supervision and notifications made to Ofsted. These do not directly impact on young people and are partly as a result of low staff ratios. Staff are busy and all prioritise spending time with young people and supporting them both in the home and in education. Time constraints impact on paperwork and management tasks. Despite this, young people's needs are central to staff practice and some outcomes for young people are outstanding. Feedback from professionals is extremely positive. One said, 'Their understanding and knowledge of children is second to none, they are informed and highly professional. The excellent progress children make here is as a direct result of the staff input'.

The staff team are established and experienced. They share a collective vision for the home and hold high aspirations for young people. The staff work tirelessly to offer young people opportunities experienced by their peers. Young people benefit from emotional stability, a wide range of activities, peer relationships and a highly stable staff team. This gives them consistency, social opportunities, security and improved life chances. Staff are under increasing pressure due to staff ratios that are set by the organisation this does not consistently support the needs and numbers of young people placed. Managers are aware of this and a review of staff hours and job roles is underway.

Training is good staff are fully equipped for their roles and say their professional development is fostered. The staff team work very well together, supervision is ongoing and staff say they feel fully supported. However, records of supervision are incomplete.

Records provide an oversight and understanding of children's daily lives. All events are filed and chronologies are detailed. However, notifications are not always made within reasonable time scales and one was not notified at all. This prevents Ofsted from gaining a true picture of events at 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.