

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC037984
Inspection date	15/06/2011
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/12/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people, of either sex, aged 12 years to 17 years old. The home is owned by a private limited company.

At the time of this inspection there were three children living at the home. All of the young people were present during parts of this visit and some spoke with the inspector about the care they receive.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people living at the home benefit from good levels of close individual support. They live in a homely environment and receive good help with their personal health care needs. They also receive good support and encouragement from staff both to participate positively in their education, to practice and develop their independent life skills and to celebrate their achievements.

Young people also enjoy good supportive relationships with staff at the home. They are encouraged to discuss their care needs and to contribute to their care plans. The staff team is experienced. They provide young people with good support to help keep them safe. Young people are encouraged to be involved in their local community. The arrangements in place to monitor and manage the home are satisfactory. However, some of these arrangements do not always work effectively. In addition, some staff training and staff policies need to be updated and some records need to be completed in better detail. This would better demonstrate the quality of care provided to young people.

Areas for improvement

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
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose for the home includes all of the information required Regulation 4 (1) Schedule 1 (2)	17/08/2011
33	ensure that the monitoring reports completed on behalf of the	17/08/2011

(2001)	registered provider take place at the frequency required. Regulation 33 (3)	
--------	--	--

Recommendations

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

- include photographs of the home in the written information provided to each young people in advance of their stay (NMS 11.3)
- ensure that the completion of any necessary repairs at the home are clearly recorded in the repairs log (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that all care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification (NMS 18.5)
- ensure that staff are trained and equipped with the skills to meet the needs of the children. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people who live at the home receive good individual support. They talk regularly with staff team members about their care needs. The level of support provided to them each day is monitored by the manager. This support can be further adjusted each day to help ensure that individual needs are met. The staff team keep good records which clearly demonstrate the quality of care provided. Young people are encouraged and supported to participate in a good range of activities in their local community. Young people say they are 'always' helped by staff to be involved in out of school activities that they are interested in.

Young people living at the home benefit from the health care services that they need. The home has access to a good range of health professionals. The staff team work in close partnership with these professionals and placing social workers to ensure that the support provided is effective. The staff team complete detailed health plans for each young person. These help to demonstrate how the health needs of young people are being met. Young people are looked after by the staff team if they are ever unwell. All of the staff team are trained in first aid. They have also been trained in the administration of medication and safe food hygiene.

The staff team provide good support to young people to help them practice and develop their independent life skills. Young people can buy the clothes and personal items that they need. The staff team help young people to learn the skills they will need as an adult, for example paying bills and being able to cook and keep a house clean. Written plans and agreements are made to help young people to plan and practice their self care skills. Their progress is regularly reviewed at their care team meetings.

Young people receive good help in meeting their education and future employment needs. All of the young people living at the home are engaged in education. They confirm that the staff team help them to attend school regularly and also help them with their school work. Parents confirm this. Placing social workers describe the very regular updates they receive regarding the educational progress made by the young people they have placed. The staff team maintain good records which help to demonstrate the effectiveness of the support they provide to young people in their education. The home has a good range of educational resources which are used by young people to support the learning.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

The care needs of each young person living at the home are agreed with them and their placing social workers. These are then recorded in very good detail and maintained for reference by the staff team. Young people receive very regular opportunities to talk about their care needs. The staff team give them good encouragement and support to do this. Young people know about their placement plans. The recording within these plans is very detailed and they are updated very regularly following any agreed changes. The plans demonstrate very effectively how the staff team work in partnership with young people, their social workers and family to achieve good outcomes in their care. All care plans are also monitored regularly by the manager. Regular meetings take place to review the quality of the care provided to young people. Key workers provide very detailed written reports to these meetings. Young people are encouraged to write down their views and to attend each meeting in person. Young people are also consulted about the venues for these meetings and they are given a number of positive options to consider and choose from. Young people confirm that they are helped to take part in these meetings. Parents are very positive about how staff talk with them regarding the care provided to their child, ask for their views on their future care plans and encourage them to attend review meetings. They also describe very positively how they are encouraged to talk with staff as often as they wish.

Detailed risk assessments are completed by staff when young people first come to stay at the home. These assessments are completed in partnership with young people and their placing social workers and help to ensure that young people are admitted safely and settle in quickly. Written information about the home is provided to young people in advance of their stay. However, this information does not include any photos of the home to help young people become more familiar with the building in advance of their first visit. Young people receive good practical support to maintain regular contact with their family and friends where this is appropriate. Parents are very positive about these arrangements.

The home enjoys easy access to the local town. The building itself is decorated and furnished very comfortably. It is very well cared for by the staff and the young people who live there. Each young person has their own bedroom. There are good bathroom facilities as well as kitchen, dining and lounge areas. The staff team monitor the physical condition of the building, report any repairs and work to ensure that it remains homely and comfortable for the young people who live there. However, the records of these repairs is not always fully completed on each occasion to demonstrate that necessary work has been completed promptly.

The staff team actively involve young people in menu choice and encourage them to contribute their ideas to menu planning. Young people prepare meals with the support of staff on duty. All of the staff team have received training in safe food hygiene. Individual food preferences are discussed with each young person and are incorporated into the main menus. A clear record is kept of what young people eat. This helps to demonstrate that they enjoy a suitable and healthy diet.

Young people enjoy good relationships with the staff team. When asked 'what is good about the home' young people describe both 'the staff' and 'staff talking with

us'. Young people describe how they 'love the staff as they support us for the future and teach us about many things'. Young people are also encouraged to give their views at the very regular house meetings. Young people describe the time they spend with their key worker as 'very good'. They also describe the care and support they receive at the home as 'good' or 'very good'.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

There are good arrangements in place at the home which help the staff team to safeguard young people effectively. The staff team receive safeguarding training and have reporting procedures in place which helps them to protect young people from abuse and to keep them safe. Thorough risk assessments are completed for each young person. These are regularly reviewed to help ensure that they work effectively to protect young people. Young people feel safe living at the home.

The home has agreed protocols with the local police and these are used to help ensure that if young people go missing, they are found and kept safe as quickly as possible. Very positively, young people are rarely missing. The staff team also have clear guidance to follow which helps them to minimise the risk of bullying. They work hard to develop and maintain very positive relationships with all young people living at the home.

The staff team receive training in the appropriate use of physical restraint. The use of restraints is only occasionally necessary at the home. There is agreed guidance for staff to follow if sanctions are ever seen to be necessary. Young people and their parents know what the home 'rules' are. They have no concerns regarding the use of restraint where this is ever necessary at the home. Young people and their parents know how to complain if they are ever unhappy about something that happened.

Detailed risk assessments and regular safety checks are completed by staff to help ensure the home is a safe place for young people to live in. However, the completion of any necessary repairs at the home are not always clearly recorded in the repairs log. Regular checks are completed on the fire safety equipment kept in place to help protect young people in any emergency. The staff team regularly practice what to do in any emergency and involve all young people in this.

Young people living at the home are cared for by a very stable staff team. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on any new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **satisfactory**.

The home has a Statement of Purpose which has been recently reviewed and is generally well presented. However, the current version does not include all of the information required. Young people also receive their own guide to the home. It contains very good information about how the service is provided and informs young people who they should speak to if they need any further advice.

The staff team provide young people with very good individual support and support their cultural needs. They understand the individual strengths of each young person living at the home and encourage them to work to fulfil their potential.

The staff team overall are experienced in working with children and young people. They are regularly supervised and are supported to access additional training opportunities. However, not all of the staff team are sufficiently qualified or up to date with their required training. In addition, not all of the policies and procedures put in place to support staff have been reviewed and updated at the frequency required. The manager regularly monitors and adjusts staffing levels at the home to ensure that young people are given the support they need.

The home has very good management arrangements and there are very good systems in place to monitor the home's records and to create monthly reports regarding the quality of the service provided to young people. The manager uses these systems very effectively to help monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the home and to further improve the service where possible. Monitoring visits are also completed on behalf of the registered provider. The quality of monitoring within these visits is good. However, visits do not always occur at the frequency required by regulation. Two actions and five recommendations were made at the previous inspection visit. All of these have been implemented in full by the manager and staff team..

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.