

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC039038
Inspection date	20/12/2010
Inspector	Warren Clarke
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	17/02/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home provides residential care for young people with learning difficulties, aged from 12 to under 18 years. The home is purpose-built and situated on the outskirts of a city. It is within easy reach of a range of community resources and public transport.

There are seven single bedrooms with en-suite bathroom facilities, two of which also have a small kitchenette to support young people moving towards independent living. There are two lounges, a dining area and a games room. The home additionally has staff sleeping-in and waking-night facilities and office accommodation. Young people have access to a large rear garden.

At the time of inspection, seven young people whose average age 16 years, were accommodated and present. They all contributed to the inspection, either directly, or through observations of how they are being looked after.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This unannounced interim inspection assessed the home's performance against the national minimum standards relevant to the 'Every Child Matters' outcome of staying safe. The home has consistently provided the young people with excellent standards of care and continues to do. Some young people who are able to communicate their views say that they are happy living in the home and they have no worries. Observations of others show that they have an easy, relaxed rapport with staff and are content in the home's environment.

Staff recognise the vulnerability of the young people and ensure they are protected from harm and abuse. However, this is skilfully balanced by the home's stimulating environment and effective care practices that enable the young people to live normal fulfilled lives. Young people thrive in this setting in which staff successfully maximise their potential for development, and maintain the home's reputation for preparing the young people for adulthood with the confidence and skills to live fulfilled lives.

Improvements since the last inspection

A recommendation was made for at least four fire drills to be conducted annually in order to comply with fire safety requirements. Since the recommendation was made, a system of monthly fire drills has been introduced which ensures that staff and young people remain familiar with the fire evacuation procedure.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people accommodated in the home enjoy an exceptionally good quality of life. The environment is carefully planned to mitigate limitations arising from the young people's learning difficulties. This is reflected in the excellent care practices and resources, which are skilfully used. This ensures the young people lead ordinary fulfilling lives within an environment that safeguards their privacy, promotes dignity and maximises development potential. Privacy is consistently promoted and maintained and is reflected in each young person being allocated his or her own bed sitting room, all of which have en-suite facilities. These facilities enable the young people to withdraw from the rest of the group when they prefer time alone. Furthermore, any assistance that a young person needs with aspects of personal care can be given and thereby maintains their dignity. The promotion of privacy contributes to the home's overall safe caring principles and strategy and to the confidentiality policy.

Young people are effectively protected from poor quality service and unfair treatment by the fully compliant complaints procedure. Should the young people have concerns about how they are being looked after, the clear and acceptable complaints procedure enables them to present those concerns. The procedure is actively promoted to young people by staff, the visiting Children's Rights Officer and in a range of helpful documents, including the young people's guide. The young people have not had cause to complain for some considerable time, but in the past when they have complained, their concerns have been taken seriously and pursued accordingly. There is regular monitoring of the system by the manager and on behalf of the registered provider. This adds to the overall safeguarding of the young people's welfare.

Young people say that they like living in the home and that they have no worries. There is no bullying because staff are effective and successful in fostering caring and kindness among the young people who get on well with each other. Some young people exhibit a high level of understanding and caring for others. The majority of the young people understand the concept and nature of bullying as a result of anti-bullying initiatives promoted by the local authority, schools and in the home. Recognising that some of the young people might be vulnerable to bullying outside the home, staff encourage them to talk about such experiences so that they can equip them to avoid and, if necessary, deal appropriately with it.

A coherent and comprehensive safeguarding system which is well established in the home is effective in preventing abuse and ensures staff are equipped to respond

appropriately to abuse or suspicion of it. This includes the child protection procedures, which comply with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Apart from safeguarding training being part of every member of staff's induction, they are provided with periodic refresher training and care staff complete additional training in the protection of children with special needs. The young people's demeanour and the ways in which they relate to staff and each other suggest that they are content and safe. There are no current safeguarding concerns and no referrals or investigation in this regard since the last inspection.

In the event of a young person being missing or absent without permission, which is a rare event, staff are provided with clear guidance in how to respond. The guidance is allied to the sound local multi agency 'missing from care' protocol, which ensures timely responses to recover those most vulnerable. Where occasionally a young person is absent without permission, this is usually in circumstances where those who are older push boundaries, such as in staying out later than permitted. Even though this is not condoned, it nevertheless reflects the normal development of the young people.

Generally the young people behave well, are settled and content. Staff are effective in shaping the young people's social and moral development, hence kindness and consideration for others are common features among them. This is promoted and achieved within a comprehensive behaviour management approach that takes account of each young person's circumstances. There is, for example, recognition that when some young people behave unacceptably, this is a symptom of their difficulties. Staff therefore respond with helpful guidance and only impose proportionate sanctions when these are understood and likely to influence a young person's future conduct. The young people respond well to the emphasis that staff place on encouraging, rewarding and reinforcing good behaviour. Where on occasions staff have had to physically restrain a young person, their training has enabled them to do so safely and within acceptable parameters. For example, young people are subject to physical intervention only to prevent them causing harm to themselves or others.

A comprehensive and effective range of health and safety measures, informed by risk assessments, is in place. These measures successfully safeguard young people from harm. Staff demonstrate that the system that underpins this is sufficiently robust to identify potential hazards and ensure that where they exist, action is taken to remove or control them. This is demonstrated in areas such as fire safety and the protection of the young people from access to substances harmful to health. Staff use risk assessment and health and safety measures constructively to enable the young people to live full and active lives in which some controlled risks are necessary to promote normal development.

Robust measures are established to protect the young people from potential abusers. This includes careful vetting of staff to ensure that they are suitable. For example, staff are not permitted to take up a post in the home without a satisfactory criminal record disclosure. Young people are thriving in the home and relate well to staff,

most of whom are long serving, experienced and about whose professional conduct there are no concerns .

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.