

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC039689
Inspection date	14 December 2009
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	17 June 2009
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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 local authority children's home provides medium to long term placements for up to six young people, of either gender, from 13 to 17 years of age.

The home stands in its own grounds and is on a main road, with good transport links to the local town and other towns and cities in the area. There is easy access to schools, shops and leisure facilities. The standard of the accommodation is good, with sufficient communal and private space to meet the needs of the six young people.

There were six young people living at the home at the time of this visit.

Summary

The purpose of this unannounced interim inspection was to check the national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe. The action and recommendation from the last inspection were also considered.

The home provides a good standard of care. Safeguarding has a high priority in the service. Staff are trained to understand and manage safeguarding issues appropriately and develop individual risk assessments and support plans to keep young people safe. Staff work with young people in a positive way and manage challenging behaviour at the lowest level of intervention. The systems for vetting staff and checking visitors to the service are robust and the home itself is kept safe.

One minor shortfall was identified during this inspection. The most up-to-date gas safety certificate was not available in the home on the day of the visit, to confirm the checks that have been undertaken.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The action and recommendation made at the last inspection are both met.

The manager of the home was registered with Ofsted in October 2009. This meets the regulations.

Staff record details of the discussions they have with a young person who has been missing from the home, when they return. This enables them to assess and update the plans that are in place to protect the young person.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The home has effective arrangements in place to protect young people and promote their welfare. These include procedures to deal with safeguarding, unauthorised absences, bullying

and behaviour management. Detailed risk assessments for each young person enable staff to develop individual support plans that are appropriate to their specific needs.

Young people are protected from abuse because staff are trained in child protection procedures and have a good understanding of their responsibilities in relation to responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns. There is a robust protocol to support young people if they go missing from the home, which staff follow in practice. Staff contribute to all multi-agency meetings that are arranged to discuss the safety and welfare of young people, which ensures that the plans that are in place to protect young people are kept up to date and information is shared appropriately.

There is evidence that bullying is not an issue in the home. Young people are made aware that bullying is not tolerated and are encouraged to approach staff with any concerns they have. Staff talk to young people about the impact of bullying and make sure that they are appropriately supervised in the home. This enables them to respond promptly if they identify any difficulties between young people.

Staff encourage young people to behave in a socially acceptable way and to understand and respect the rights of others, both inside the home and in the community. All staff are trained to respond positively to behaviour that is challenging, including the use of physical restraints. However, physical intervention is only ever used as a last resort, which promotes the welfare of young people. Sanctions are appropriate and are applied fairly to all young people. Relationships between young people and staff are positive.

Evidence from records confirms that young people feel confident about making complaints and that issues that are raised are dealt with promptly and in line with the home's procedure. Staff encourage young people to let them know if there is a problem, so that they can deal with difficulties at an early stage.

The privacy of young people is properly respected. They have individual bedrooms where they can spend private time and are able to make and receive telephone calls in private. Staff understand the need to keep information that is held about young people secure and confidential.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is kept safe. Risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep them up to date and relevant to changing circumstances. Young people take part in evacuation drills, so that they understand what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency. There is evidence that electrical equipment and gas installations are checked at regular intervals, but the most up-to-date gas safety certificate was not available in the home on the day of the inspection.

Staff recruitment practice is sound and ensures that all new staff are thoroughly vetted before they are allowed to start work at the home. All visitors to the home are checked. These systems protect young people from individuals who may pose a risk to them.

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 good.

The home is well managed by an experienced and qualified manager. Young people are well cared for by a team of staff who are trained and qualified and who have a clear focus on helping them to achieve good outcomes.

Evidence from this inspection shows that there are sufficient staff on duty to ensure that young people are looked after safely by staff who are known to them. The majority of the staff team are qualified to an appropriate level and staff confirm that training opportunities within the authority are good. This ensures that they are equipped to understand and to meet the needs of the young people they look after.

Management monitoring systems are robust which means that the work of the home is properly monitored. Monthly checks are made by the manager and there are regular visits to the service by another manager who is independent of this home. Detailed reports of all checks are sent to senior managers within the local authority, to provide evidence of the monitoring work that has been undertaken. The manager takes prompt action on any issue that is identified, to ensure that good standards of care are maintained within the home.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that a copy of the current gas safety certificate is available in the home. (NMS 26.4)