

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC039897
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Council House, Mary Stevens Park STOURBRIDGE West Midlands DY8 2AA
Responsible individual	Nicola Jane Prashar
Registered manager	Melanie Hollman-Dryden
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	28/08/2014
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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	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress and have positive outcomes in all aspects of their lives. Young people, their parents and carers receive good support from the staff team to discuss their individual care needs and are encouraged to be involved in planning how these needs can be met. They receive good support regarding their personal health care needs. They participate regularly in a broad range of healthy leisure activities in their local community. The building overall is decorated and furnished to a good standard. It provides a safe and comfortable environment for the young people who live there.

Young people are kept safe through well known safeguarding procedures and a positive behaviour management system that rewards on a consistent basis. Although there are incidents of young people going missing, these are responded to well by the staff.

The staff team is led by a strong and diligent manager who consistently develops the home. The staff team work very well together and have a consistent approach to the care of the young people.

Minor developments need to be completed in recordings of complaints and missing from care. However, to date these shortfalls have not had an adverse impact on the

overall good quality of care that young people receive from the staff team and manager.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority owned children's home can accommodate up to four young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
11/10/2013	Full	good
20/03/2013	Interim	good progress
06/11/2012	Full	outstanding

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in the light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure children receive prompt feedback on any concerns or complaints raised and are kept informed of progress (NMS 1.6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress while they are at the home. They become aware of how choices and actions impact on their lives, due to experienced staff helping them to understand their life events. One young person stated that living at the home had improved their self-confidence and staff made her feel 'supported and cared for.'

Young people are involved with a range of educational placements. They are consistently encouraged by staff to maximise their opportunities to progress and succeed. Although young people experience challenges in attending education one young person reported that staff had supported them with a college application which has now progressed to interview stage and that 'this would not have happened without the help of the staff.'

Young people's awareness of safety improves due to the work of the staff team Maitland Road Children's Home. Young people who go missing from care are supported by staff and external professionals who work collaboratively to understand the reasoning behind the absences. As a result of this young people's communication with the home when they are out has developed. One social worker reported that the support one young person received from staff at the home had made a significant difference to that young person and that she had reduced her self-harming behaviour as a result.

Young people are fully supported with improving their level of health through regular appointments with health professionals. A psychiatrist helps to support the young people and staff team in developing strategies to respond to health and behavioural issues. This approach has assisted young people's progress due to a consistent approach to behaviour management and risk taking behaviour.

Young people are encouraged to make a contribution around the home, learning life skills which will assist their transition to adulthood. Young people benefit from individualised independence training plans. This rewards young people for involvement with differing activities in the home and enhances their skills.

Young people participate in community activities offering opportunities to make friends, learn new skills, and grow in confidence. One young person gave very positive feedback about a recent break and that this had been the first time they had gone away for a holiday and that this had offered them a new experience as a result. Young people also participate in a charity fundraising day in the local community and this increases their awareness of health and community issues and increases young people's self confidence.

Young people maintain and develop appropriate contact with family and friends.

Young people are supported in visiting family outside the area, others has relatives visiting at the home and staying for meals. This ensures that young people retain contact and build relationships with important people and contributes to their self-esteem and self-knowledge.

Quality of care

good

Young people develop positive relationships with the staff team and their peers while they are in the home. Staff are observed consistently supporting young people and being responsive to their opinions and expectations. Young people are subsequently guided well by the staff team and learn about necessary boundaries in behaviours. Young people who used to live at the home state that 'it doesn't matter who you talk to, they all listen to you and try to help you out.' A social worker commented that the staff have a strong commitment to the young people and relationships between young people and the staff team is positive.

Young people's views and opinions are consistently sought through regular meetings and discussions. These take place through both formal situations within group or key worker meetings, as well as daily discussions about life within the home. This ensures that young people have a say in a wide range of aspects of the running of the home and also they understand when their requests cannot be responded to.

Complaints systems are known by young people from the start of their placement due to information within the young people's guide and from key worker meetings. Complaints are fully recorded although the outcomes of all those made are not clear. Good support is available for young people to make complaints through an advocacy service, who also visit the home on a monthly basis to offer additional support.

Placement planning is highly individualised. The home's placement plans link well to the placing authorities' documentation, allowing a consistent approach to the care of young people. Staff are aware of the plans for young people and they are updated on a regular basis. Reviews are completed either on a six monthly basis or when additional concerns are raised. Young people are invited to reviews and discuss their views either within the review itself or through staff prior to the meeting. This ensures that young people have a say in their own care planning and contact arrangements.

Young people's health is consistently supported by the staff team who make sure that appointments are kept and any actions arising from these are acted upon. Visits to a range of health professionals are completed from the point of admission and additional referrals and visits to mental health professionals are made depending on the level of support necessary. Young people are visited by sexual health staff where concerns arise. Staff help to develop young people's awareness of a healthy lifestyle and nutritional meals play a part in this. For young people who smoke, cessation packages are promoted and there are also links to drug and alcohol organisations to

respond to concerning behaviours, promote healthier living and decrease risk.

Staff fully support young people's education, seeking out differing educational placements to best meet their needs. All of the young people find education attendance difficult but the staff team are diligent in challenging the barriers to education and ensure that they receive as positive an experience of education and training as possible.

Young people enjoy activities both within the home and externally. All young people go on holiday, having a choice in the places they go to and the staff that go with them. The home is well resourced with activities and the local area has a good range of leisure centres, swimming pools and community resources that the young people enjoy.

The staff team promote an awareness of differing faiths and communities. Young people are made aware of differing festivals and a new flag pole and flag help to give the home an identity and raise an awareness of the home's location and heritage.

The home is well decorated throughout, with communal areas of the home personalised with photos of young people and the activities that they have been involved with. This gives a real feeling of a homely environment and decreases damage to the home.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home has good arrangements in place to help safeguard young people. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that the staff team understand how to protect children and safeguard their welfare. The staff team are trained to help protect young people from abuse and have access to agreed safeguarding procedures and guidance. They complete detailed risk assessments and care plans in partnership with parents, carers, placing social workers and young people themselves where possible. These plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for each young person. They are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain effective in helping to keep young people safe.

Young people have gone missing from the home but well known systems are in place to report and support them on their return. Links are in place with both the police and the local missing persons team who offer support to young people to help them understand the dangers of such behaviours. Recordings of incidents of absence are kept within individual young people's files, but these are not always clear within the home's records.

Staff consistently promote positive behaviours. A well understood token system is in place to target individual behaviours that require development as well as rewarding chores and exceptional help within the home. The staff team are trained to use

physical restraint where this is necessary to keep young people safe. Sanctions are used to respond to negative behaviours and staff attempt to link these, in line with restorative justice. Behaviour management records are well kept. Overall, the relationships between the staff team and the young people are very positive and sanctions and restraint therefore rarely need to be used.

The manager and staff team complete regular health and safety checks of the building to help minimise any risks to the young people. They work to ensure that the home provides a safe and comfortable environment. Staff and young people know what to do in any emergency and they practice this regularly.

No new staff have started work at the home since the last inspection. Previous recruitment checks showed that appropriate information is examined prior to staff's appointment to keep young people safe.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The arrangements in place to lead, manage and monitor the service provided at the home are of a very high quality. Social care professionals with links to the home believe strongly that improving outcomes for children is the clear priority of the manager and staff team. The manager has been in post at the home for 12 years and is qualified with the registered manager's award. The staff team are highly supportive of the management team and state that they are always available to talk if they have any concerns.

Previous requirements relating to behaviour management records and external monitoring have been fully met. The home has a detailed development plan which all staff have had an involvement in completing. This shows that the whole staff team strive towards improvements both for the operation of the home and for the positive outcomes of young people.

There is a statement of purpose in place which accurately describes the service provided. Young people receive their own personal summary guide to the home. These are well presented and contain pertinent information about living at the home and how to receive additional support.

External and internal monitoring of the home is completed regularly with detailed yet easy to read reports from this monitoring. Excellent summaries of the young people and how their needs are being met form part of the internal three monthly assessments of the home. This monitoring ensures the management and the staff team have a strong awareness of the strengths of the home and also areas requiring further development.

The stable staff team offer a consistently high level of care to the young people. All staff are regularly supervised by senior staff who have completed additional training

for this role. All (ADMINISTRATOR: Not clear what the reference to minutes is about. Is it staff meetings?) staff have annual appraisals with the outcomes of these leading to individuals' training being planned for the coming year. All staff are fully up to date with mandatory training and additional courses have been presented by professionals linked to the home, such as advocacy training and the training in asthma provided by the looked after children's nurse. The high level of importance placed on the support and development of the staff team ensures that staff feel valued and able to pass on their knowledge to improve the care of the young people.

Young people's files are regularly audited to ensure that they are kept up to date. They are clear and information is easy to find within them. All information is stored securely either within paper files or electronically to support young people's privacy.

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.