

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040631
Inspection date	04/11/2013
Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	23/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is run and managed by the local authority. The home offers care and accommodation for up to eight young people who have emotional and, or behavioural issues.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people at the home receive a good level of care at the home. Comprehensive assessment and planning ensures that individual needs are identified and that the work required to address issues is carried out. There is a clear emphasis on seeing each young person as an individual and ensuring that they develop emotionally, socially and educationally.

Relationships between staff and young people are positive and the manager and team have created a culture of support and nurturing which is recognised and valued by the young people. Robust and detailed systems are in place to assess, monitor and review care needs ensuring that care delivered is of an outstanding standard. Young people say they feel safe within the home and that their opinions are respected and valued. Education and enriching activities are promoted to a good standard. Young people have achieved successes especially when bearing in mind their starting points when they were admitted.

The manager and senior staff communicate an expectation to the staff team that care given to the young people must be of a very good standard. Quality of care in the home is subject to thorough and robust monitoring. A stable and committed staff team examine their practice constantly with a view to improving the service that they offer to the young people. The manager and staff team have acted upon the last recommendations made at the home and have complied with them to improve the care provided to the young people.

The home receive one recommendation at this inspection which concerned an updating and review of some of the policies and procedures.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff work is consistent with the homes policies and procedures and ensure these documents are reviewed and kept up to date. NMS 21.3

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from excellent individualised support which helps them grow in confidence and to understand their past. The key worker system enables young people to focus on their goals and progress. Regular key work sessions provide an avenue for them to discuss their feelings. One young person said 'I get a lot of care and I think it's awesome'. Staff are aware of young people's strengths and vulnerabilities and help to nurture their talents and interests. This approach ensures that each young person feels valued and that the care and support they receive really helps them make positive choices in their lives.

Young people enjoy a variety of activities. These include Army Cadets, football, horse riding, diving, basketball and tai-Kwando. They also enjoy cinema, bowling, theme parks and outings to cities. Young people have also been on holiday twice once to France skiing and snowboarding and the second in the summer to Devon. All trips and activities are risk assessed. The young people enjoy and learn from their new experiences and are safeguarded while doing so.

Young people benefit from planned health services which include access to psychological and psychiatric assistance if required. The young people particularly benefit from having their emotional health and well-being promoted to a high standard by the staff team. Young people receive comprehensive advice and guidance on issues such as sexual health, drug awareness and other areas such as sexual exploitation.

Young people benefit from a good standard of education and the opportunities to experience this as a positive part of their lives. All young people resident at the time of the inspection attend education and attendance is good. They receive good levels of support and benefit from members of staff encouraging them educationally; especially when taking into consideration the young people's experiences and attendance levels before they were admitted to the unit.

Young people have appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are

important to them; these contacts are managed sensitively and emphasis is placed on the importance of these taking place. Restrictions on visits are in place where needed and contact can be supervised and supported. One parent said 'they are very welcoming and highly-experienced staff'.

Young people receive comprehensive and carefully thought out support to develop their independent living skills in conjunction with their age. Support offered to young people when in transition and preparing to move on is very good with staff finding the right level of support for each individual young person's needs.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from the excellent quality of personalised support and care provided by the staff team. Good, positive relationships with clear boundaries enable the young people to develop self-awareness and feel safe. One young person said, 'the staff understand me and they're supportive'.

The young people's views are promoted and valued to a high standard. There are numerous forums both formal and informal to enable young people to voice their feelings and opinions. An advocate visits the home to discuss areas of care and any personal issues the young people may have. There is a culture of promoting young people's rights and encouraging them to voice their feelings and opinions appropriately. Young people are able to influence decisions relating to their daily lives, such as independent living and transition planning.

The complaints process is easy to understand, readily available and used by the young people. They are aware of the system and know the various adults and organisations to who they can complain. The manager addresses complaints promptly and ensures that the young people are happy about and understand the resolution to any complaints they have made. Young people were observed to be confident in expressing their feelings and opinions. Any neighbourhood concerns and complaints are responded to quickly and efficiently.

Young people's comprehensive care plans clearly identify their individual needs. Good levels of monitoring enable staff to evaluate young people's progress. This process in turn contributes positively to the statutory reviews of young people's care and means that reports and staff input accurately reflects each young person's progress and areas of concern. The young people confirmed they were always supported in meetings and understood and contributed to their placement plans.

Healthy lifestyles are encouraged by the staff who guide young people in choosing healthy menus and encourage them to partake in physical exercise and activities. The staff's awareness of each young person's background and vulnerabilities ensures that the young people's emotional well-being is promoted to a particularly outstanding standard.

Young people are enabled to follow their individual needs, including cultural and spiritual needs. The culture of the home ensures that education is promoted and highly valued. Progress is excellent, with young people achieving some goals and success that they may have never experienced prior to their admission to the home.

Young people benefit from living in a home which is maintained to a high standard. Maintenance is undertaken on a routine basis by staff employed by the organisation. Young people were observed to be happy with their accommodation and were comfortable in their surroundings. The young people are able to decorate their bedrooms and have posters and pictures of their own choosing on the walls. Sleeping-in staff have their own dedicated accommodation. The home has communal areas including the two living rooms, games area, computer/homework room and dining room. The house has beautiful gardens for the use of the young people. Young people confirmed they had access to a telephone that could be used in private.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people reported that they feel supported, cared for and protected in the home. Members of staff are aware of what to do in the event that they have concerns about a young person's well-being. Records indicate that, in such instances, action is taken effectively and promptly and that the manager robustly checks and monitors any records in relation to safeguarding issues.

Young people confirmed that bullying is not a problem. However there are issues where young people at times find peer relationships difficult, but they confirmed these are dealt with fairly by the staff. Young people are advised and informed about the issues of bullying and understand that it is not acceptable in the home.

Young people do go missing from the home. Work is being done with young people around why they go missing and what causes this to happen. Young people who do go missing are protected as far as possible and are responded to positively on their return. The home has connections with the local police force and work with the police protocol in place. One social worker said 'Children sometimes go missing but the home has appropriate procedures in place and works well with children on keeping themselves safe.'

The effective management of the young people's behaviour is a strong aspect of the unit and situations are dealt with through discussion and communication. Positive relationships between staff and the young people ensure that physical restraint would only be used as a last resort. Records of restraints and sanctions are detailed and are very well maintained.

The home has a robust recruitment policy which ensures that only adults who have been assessed as suitable to work with young people are employed. Young people are involved in the interviewing process of new staff.

Risk assessments and safety checks of the premises and fire equipment ensure that the young people live in a safe environment. Fire drills are undertaken at regular periods to ensure that everyone is up to date with emergency procedures. The safe systems operated in the home and the detailed attention given to each young person's needs and vulnerabilities help ensure that safety is promoted to a good standard.

Leadership and management

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

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is available at the home. The children's guide is produced in an appropriate format. Young people confirmed they were supplied with a copy on arrival. The Statement of Purpose is available to social workers, parents and carers. The home operates in line with its stated objectives and is efficiently and effectively managed.

At the last inspection the home received four recommendations which related to the recording of key work sessions and chasing the local authority to re-schedule overdue reviews. Both of these areas have been addressed.

The home was also recommended to ensure young people have an independent living programme in place and have a copy of the National Minimum Standards 2002 and the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 available in the home. These recommendations have also been addressed.

Young people benefit from a home which is very effectively and consistently managed. Monitoring and reflective practice ensure that manager and senior staff communicate an expectation to the staff team that the care given to the young people must be of a very good standard. Members of staff report being very committed to the well-being of the young people and very well supported in their role by good management. This approach is underpinned by having thorough systems to monitor the quality of care.

Regular training and supervision practice is of a good standard overall and contributes to young people benefitting from a consistent, supported lifestyle at the home. Such areas as sexual exploitation are being covered in training provided to staff.

There is good compliance with external monitoring reports, which have been used to further improve practice and meet any areas of weakness. Clear, comprehensive internal monitoring reports are undertaken by the manager.

The staffing complement ensures that there are always sufficient staff on shift to be able to respond to young people's needs. The low staff turnover and the stability of the staff team ensures that the young people benefit from consistent care by a motivated staff team.

Records are clear, up to date, stored securely, and contribute to an understanding of the young people's lives. All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.