

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040631
Inspection date	14 September 2009
Inspector	John Chivers
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	20 April 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

The home is managed by the County Council and is one of a number of Children's Homes administered by the Local Authority. The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of nine children of either gender aged between nine and 13 years on admission. The home is situated in the village centre and close to local facilities and amenities. Admissions are generally planned, although in exceptional circumstances an emergency admission may be considered where the child falls within the home's admission criteria.

The home provides a caring and supportive service to children with a wide range of needs.

Summary

This inspection was an unannounced, interim inspection. All of the 'key' standards of the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes in the section 'Staying Safe' were assessed. The sections Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation were not assessed at this inspection. The two actions made at the last inspection have now been fully addressed and only one recommendation is made as a result of this inspection. The home is managed in a sound and professional way and provides a very good standard of care and support to the resident children having full regard for equality and diversity throughout all aspects of its operation.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the registered manager was asked to ensure that a child's outstanding health care history was pursued from the Placing Authority and that a current annual development plan is drawn up for the home.

The health care history has now been obtained which will give staff more information regarding the individuals health and medical background and an annual development for 2009 is now in place which provides clear details of intended future developments for the home.

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 a policy and procedure regarding privacy and confidentiality of which all staff read and sign to confirm their understanding of the policy. Confidential records are securely held in locked cabinets and drawers within a locked office. There is a telephone for children's use without reference to staff which is situated at a private location where children's help and advice lines are displayed. Children are able to lock their bedroom doors and have lockable cupboards in which to keep valued and treasured possessions. Toilet and bathing facilities afford good privacy and there is ample space for children to receive appropriate visitors in private. Staff treat children with dignity and respect their privacy.

The home's complaints procedure is available and a simplified version of the procedure is held for the children. Staff receive training regarding the complaints procedure and the procedure is also reinforced periodically at staff team meetings. The home's complaints book shows that no complaints have been received since the last inspection. Children are aware of the complaints procedure and know who to complain to and raise no issues in this area. The home provides a professional and supportive service which helps reduce the likelihood of complaints arising.

The home holds the County Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding procedures of which all staff are aware of and have access to. Staff receive training in child protection and safeguarding at induction and have on going refresher training in this area as part of a home's commitment to the safeguarding of children. Children are taught about aspects of their personal safety via their individual schools curriculum and these areas are reinforced by staff in individual and group discussion with children. Children have individual risk assessments. Supervision of children is close without being intrusive and supervision levels are increased where necessary and appropriate. The home takes safeguarding issues very seriously and keeps diligent records and follows standard procedures in such circumstances. There are no current child protection or safeguarding issues regarding the conduct of the home. Children feel safe, secure and well cared for by staff.

The home has clear anti-bullying policies and procedures and comprehensive information is available for the children in this area. There are also a range of policies regarding anti-discrimination and equal opportunities. There are no significant incidents regarding bullying or intimidating behaviour among the children and staff are quick to challenge such conduct when it arises. The home provides a warm, homely and friendly atmosphere where children relate positively towards each other and the ambience and ethos maintained by the home helps reduce the likelihood of bullying occurring.

There are clear policies and procedures regarding children who are absent without authority and records show that no unauthorised absences have occurred since the last inspection.

The home has a policy and procedure regarding behaviour management which includes areas such as permitted and non permitted sanctions and the use of physical restraint; however the policy is currently in the process of being reviewed and updated by the County Council. The home follows the 'Positive Options' system of behaviour management which is a recognised and approved programme of behaviour management in Children's Homes and Children's residential settings. All staff are trained in behaviour management. Staff have excellent relationships with the children and interact and engage with them appropriately. Children's behaviour is very well managed and children respond to staff requests and instructions in a positive manner. All of the children are currently within the home's remit in terms of behaviour management and control and no significant issues in this area are evident. Sanctions and restraint are rarely used and detailed records are kept regarding the implementation of these. Such records are also signed by the home's Regulation 33 monthly visitor.

The home has a health and safety policy and the health and safety 'law' poster is displayed. Staff receive training in health and safety and fire awareness. The home has a written fire risk assessment and a range of generic risk assessments; however some of these need to be reviewed and updated. Fire evacuation drills and fire alarm tests occur on a regular basis. Part of the home's fire systems are currently being updated and a new fire panel has recently been installed. Fire fighting equipment has recently been tested and serviced. Current utility safety test

certificates are available. Standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high throughout the home and no safety hazards are evident in the areas of the premises accessed. The home takes active steps to keep children, staff and visitors safe from the inherent risk of fire and other potential safety hazards.

No new staff have been appointed since the last inspection. Staff recruitment files were not revisited on this occasion, where the home's recruitment and vetting procedures have previously evidenced as robust and sound and hold all required information, including two written references and checks via the Criminal Records Bureau at enhanced level. The home also includes children in the recruitment process by seeking their views and opinions following meeting candidates prior to interview. The home's recruitment and vetting procedures help ensure that only suitable staff are employed to look after the children.

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.

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 generic risk assessments are reviewed and updated. (NMS 26)