

Inspection report for children's home

---

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC044224          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 10 September 2009 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Elaine Clare      |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key               |

---

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 17 December 2008 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://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 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 care home offers care and accommodation for young people who have learning disabilities, who are aged from seven to 17 years old. The home is registered to care for young people of both genders, however, at the time of this inspection males occupied all four places. The home is a detached property standing in its own grounds. Accommodation is well maintained and suitably decorated, creating a good first impression. There is an enclosed rear garden, where the young people can play safely and the premises are suitably adapted to support their needs.

The home is situated approximately two miles from the town centre and it is close to bus routes, that connect it with the local community and the rail link in the city. The home also have their own vehicle. The home has sufficient space and rooms, where the young people can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

The organisation responsible also operate an independent 52 week school. It is co-educational and caters for pupils and students from the age of seven years old up to 19 years old. The school has 17 residential places with accommodation provided in four separate houses, within the local area. These properties are registered as children's homes. The organisation's policy is for houses to be detached properties, located in suburban residential areas.

### Summary

At this unannounced full inspection all key standards were inspected. This is a good service, with some outstanding features. Some National Minimum Standards have only partly been met, but have a limited impact on the welfare of young people. Young people have achieved considerable positive outcomes in relation to their emotional health, behaviour and educational achievements. There are strong links with specialist health services and professionals.

The home currently accommodates two adults and two children and this does not meet the condition of registration of a children's home.

Young people engage in meaningful activities within the local community, and are fully supported to learn independence skills. Staff support is provided at the organisation's school and attendance is well maintained. Staff are consistent and caring in their approach to the young people and they have mutually respectful relationships. Young people feel very cared for by the staff team, and they enjoy a comfortable and relaxed environment.

Written assessments and plans are good in detail. The regular staff meetings, supervision and training sessions provide staff with the verbal guidance and support on understanding and meeting young people's needs. Staff receive training based on the needs of the young people. However, training records show that only some staff have received adequate training in first aid and child protection. Recruitment procedures are thorough and contain all the necessary written information.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the last inspection it was recommended that a comprehensive plan was developed to prepare young people to move to adult services. This has not been completed and the recommendation has been re-issued.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are very well met by the home. Staff promptly ensure that young people are registered with a GP, dentist and opticians and that they continue having regular checks ups. The staff complete accurate medical records for each young person, detailing all medication, appointments and the action that needs to be taken. The manager has been very proactive in setting up strong links with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The manager and staff are competent at following the guidance from the CAMHS workers, and advice following a recent assessment at a specialist hospital. The staff have a good understanding of specialist health needs, such as epilepsy and autistic spectrum disorder. Young people's emotional and mental health has improved considerably while living at the home, with a considerable decrease in challenging behaviour as the young people mature.

The home has obtained all the necessary background information on the young person's health needs, and advocates well for the young people to receive the necessary health services. However, this information has not been collated into a clear written health plan for each young person setting out the range of health needs and how these will be met. The young people play a very active role in planning, cooking and shopping for their meals. Meals are varied and nutritious. There is clear guidance for staff and young people on promoting a healthy lifestyle.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by staff practices and procedures. The staff ensure that young people have a voice and that their wishes and feelings are listened to and acted upon. Some staff need to be updated on their child protection training. The young people are aware of how to raise a formal complaint through a children's guide. There have been no formal complaints made about the home by young people, parents or other professionals.

The manager and staff respect the young people's privacy. Young people are able to spend time alone within their bedroom. It was observed that staff respect them. Where risks are identified, for instance young people eating and regurgitating food or self harming behaviours, there are risk management strategies in place shared with the staff team. Other professionals are contacted promptly and appropriately when risks to young people are identified.

Young people feel safe within the home, and staff say there is no bullying within the home. The staff are aware of the effects of bullying and have information and guidance on bullying to support their practice. There are clear house rules and staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management. There have been a number of restraints of young people in the past year. These are monitored by the Registered Manager and the Regulation 33 visitor to the home. There have been no occasions when young people have absconded.

There is a dedicated trained worker responsible for fire safety within the home. All fire precaution checks are regularly carried out, and the system has shown no faults or defects. Fire equipment

is serviced frequently and the premises is risk assessed monthly. The majority of staff recruitment records are maintained appropriately by the home. Staff do not start working in the home before satisfactory checks and references are obtained.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The staff are very good at helping young people enjoy and achieve. Good outcomes have been achieved for young people educationally. Young people's attendance at school or college is exceptional, and staff are committed to ensuring young people reach their full potential. School education is provided off site by qualified teachers with care staff accompanying the young people to the organisation's school. Young people value this support with education considerably.

Young people develop a number of interests and hobbies, which improves their self esteem, confidence and social skills. Young people go to youth club, swimming, go on the home's Go-Kart, shopping in the city and walks to the local park. Further to these leisure pursuits the home also funds holidays and trips out for the young people.

A considerable amount of time is provided to young people individually by key workers and the manager. Daily target sessions are built into the home's routines, where young people have the opportunity to develop life skills. The manager provides a considerable amount of emotional support to young people at any time of the day and night when required. Each day the staff write in the young person's personal diary, detailing their daily achievements and progress made.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Young people living at this home have their needs very well met. The home has provided very good placements for young people over the past few years. The management team considers each referral thoroughly, assessing the needs of the young person and the needs of the young people already living in the home. There have been no recent placement breakdowns, and young people have settled well.

Young people are encouraged to review, understand and comment on their placement plans. The home plays a very active role in statutory reviews. They support the young people through the process, communicate closely with Independent Reviewing Officers and actively meet any review actions they are required to do.

Young people benefit greatly from the commitment of the staff team in supporting contact with friends and family. Staff are proactive at making arrangements for friends and family to partake in activities with young people, and visit the home for tea and birthdays. Transport and supervision is provided by staff where necessary. Further more, staff provide the necessary emotional support around contact issues, encourage life story work, and help young people with collecting photos of family and memorabilia.

Staff acknowledge how stressful and difficult it can be for young people moving in or out of the home. Considerable time and emotional support is given to young people individually to help them understand the move. The manager liaises closely with advocacy services to ensure

the young person's views are heard. Relationships with staff are very close, based on mutual respect.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people enjoy very homely accommodation, with comfortable furnishings. Young people's bedrooms are decorated and furnished to their taste. The home is situated near to shops, leisure activities and public transport links. There is adequate space within the home for communal eating and socialising and a lounge. Staff also have sufficient office space and a sleeping in room, although this does not interfere with the domestic feel of the property.

The young people are further encouraged to help clean and do simple chores within the home, in preparation for adult care. Young people are encouraged and supported to take part in work experience. There are no transition plans for young people to move onto adult services. These have not been prepared by the home or the placing authority.

Young people have access to their pocket money, clothing and toiletry allowance. Young people's choices are respected in relation to personal clothing styles and they are encouraged to be independent in purchasing their personal items.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Young people enjoy a home that is managed effectively and closely by the registered manager and responsible individual. The Registered Manager is competent, efficient and has a good range of skills and experience. The Registered Manager receives supervision monthly which has enhanced her practice and skill level. The young people value the manager's input and care, and other professionals regard her positively. The deputy managers have started to take on more of the management role, and are showing confidence and skill at managing the staff team. The staff team is not as settled as it has been in past, but the core staff team remains stable and sufficiently skilled to meet the needs of the young people. A range of training is provided to staff based on the needs of the young people, although the home's staff training record is not kept up to date. The majority of staff have a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People.

The staff team have a strong commitment to improving the lives of young people, and the manager further guides them well in safeguarding the young people's welfare. Feedback from other professionals confirm this, and is further reflected in the positive outcomes achieved by young people. Young people's individual and group needs are met well by a high staff ratio. Formal one-to-one supervision of staff covers a range of issues and is beneficial to the workers. However, it has not been consistently provided each month. Team meetings are frequent and provide staff with direction and guidance on consistent approaches to behaviour.

The young people's records are maintained well and ensure they have an accurate record of their needs and progress. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The home has developed a suitable Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. This information enables young people, parents and professionals to have a clear understanding of the services to be provided.

There is a condition of registration in this home which allows children who become young adults over the specified age range to continue living at the home. However, the registered person needs to take urgent action to remain appropriately registered as a children's home and ensure that they accommodate wholly or mainly children as they may be approaching a situation where this is not the case.

## 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         |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1        | ensure the home operates within its Statement of Purpose at all times (Regulation 4)                                                                                                                | 30 November 2009 |
| 6        | draw up a plan for each young person who is beyond school leaving age, to support them towards adulthood. This plan should be consistent with the placing authority's Pathway Plan (Regulation 12). | 30 November 2009 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the provision of child protection training is ongoing for the staff group (NMS 17)
- ensure there is a comprehensive plan for young people preparing to move into adult services which specifies the support and assistance they will need to enable a successful transition (NMS 6).