

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC047978
Inspection date	22 March 2010
Inspector	Mary Timms
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	18 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

The home is set within a 14 acre site which contains a small working farm. The home is able to provide accommodation for up to five young people with learning difficulties. Each young person has their own bedroom. There is a lounge, dining room, kitchen, main office and a telephone room for young people on the ground floor. All bedrooms and bathrooms are on the first floor. Staff sleeping rooms are on the first floor and waking night staff are available throughout the night to support young people. There are public transport links to the home from the roadside at the end of a long drive. Two children were present during this visit and both contributed to the inspection process.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection. The visit was planned to review the progress the provider has made with required actions and recommendations set at the previous inspection. The visit also assessed the care provided to children against key national minimum standards under the staying safe outcome area.

The service judgement and reporting on this inspection is supported by evidence from the full key inspection undertaken in June 2009 and is unchanged on this interim visit. Judgements across each outcome area will be reviewed at the next full inspection. The service continues to provide satisfactory safeguarding arrangements. However, there are areas of recording which require improvement in order to demonstrate how the service fully safeguards children. As this is an interim inspection there is limited reporting under enjoying and achieving and organisation.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager has taken action to ensure that placement needs always fall within the service set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. Individual educational needs are informed by an improved level of documentation and plans obtained from the placing authority.

Staff training records have been improved since the last inspection. However, individual training and development plans are not routinely produced for each member of staff. A further recommendation has been set and the progress made by the provider will be monitored by Ofsted. The Registered Manager has taken action to ensure that staff preparing food for children undertake food safety management training.

The Registered Manager has taken action to ensure that fixed electrical installations have been appropriately tested.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The service continues to provide satisfactory care arrangements which support children to stay safe.

Children are safeguarded by the staff recruitment procedures. Required references and checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are undertaken prior to staff commencing work in the home. However, recruitment records do not always evidence that gaps in employment history have been explained satisfactorily. Comments from children include 'yes, I feel safe living here' and also that a key reason for this is 'because of the staff'.

Staff undertake training which enhances their ability to keep children safe. Training includes, safeguarding children, behaviour management and fire safety. Senior staff undertake safeguarding children training at an advanced level.

Behaviour is well managed. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments guide care arrangements. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying to occur. Incentive schemes are used to encourage children to meet behavioural targets. Comments from children include 'yes, the rules are fair' and also confirming that 'staff talk to me about my behaviour'. Sanctions are not excessive and are used appropriately. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only to keep children safe. Records are maintained in relation to the use of any measure of control. However, there are occasions when documents fail to meet the full requirements of regulations necessary to demonstrate that children are always fully safeguarded.

Fire safety is prioritised. A member of staff has delegated responsibility to monitor fire safety arrangements. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken with both staff and children. Fire alarms are tested on a weekly basis. Staff ensure that children have an appropriate understanding of fire safety and the arrangements to protect them from fire.

Appropriate action is taken when children are found to be missing without consent. Risk management plans are prepared to guide care arrangements for children with a history of going missing. Staff are proactive when children leave, including following children on foot or by car and encouraging them to return. Appropriate notifications are made to the police, family and social workers. A detailed record is maintained of the events and circumstances when a child is missing. However, the information is not recorded onto the child's individual file, as required by regulation.

Children's privacy is respected. Comments from children confirm that they are provided with a key for their bedroom and also that 'staff always knock before coming into my room'. Children are able to make a complaint or to raise a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Each child has educational arrangements identified to meet assessed needs. The service obtains the personal educational plan from the placing authority. Also, when appropriate, a copy of the statement of special educational needs is obtained to inform educational planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

An assessment of need is undertaken. This is to ensure that the individual needs of a young person fall within the service, as set out in the home's Statement of Purpose. This means that the service plans well to ensure that children's needs can be met appropriately whilst living at this 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
27	ensure that full and satisfactory information is available in relation to all staff. In particular, this relates to the need to evidence that action has been taken at the point of recruitment to clarify any gaps in employment history (Regulation 6 and schedule 2)	30 April 2010
22	ensure that a written record is made, including the information required by regulation, in a volume kept for the purpose of the use of measures of control, discipline or restraint. (Regulation 17.4)	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each child's file contains the necessary information, as detailed in Schedule 3 of Children's Home's Regulation 2001. In particular, this relates to the required information when a child has been missing without consent (NMS 35.2)
- ensure that all childcare staff have a personal development plan. (NMS 31.4)