

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC051513
Inspection date	18 January 2010
Inspector	Elaine Cray
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	16 December 2008
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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 provides care for four young people between the ages 10 and 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home provides medium to long-term residential care and is run by the local authority. One of the beds can be used for emergency admissions.

The home is located in a residential area and has access to local facilities and public transport. There are four single bedrooms with en-suite toilet and shower facilities or an adjacent bathroom. There is large lounge, a second lounge, spacious activities room, kitchen, and dining room. The gardens are landscaped and there is car parking to the front and side of the house.

Summary

This inspection is an unannounced full inspection. All the key national minimum standards have been inspected. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation are assessed and judged as good.

Young people receive well planned and regularly reviewed care that supports their needs. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and behaviour is well managed. Young people are safe and their welfare is promoted. Young people are provided with opportunities to develop skills and confidence and staff are proud of the young people's achievements.

Two recommendations are set as a result of this visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were set at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The promotion of young people's health and arrangements for medical needs are well organised. There are improvements in the physical health of young people and a growing awareness by young people of how to maintain healthier diets and lifestyles.

Medical and health records are well-documented and clearly show that young people's medical appointments are arranged and their health closely monitored. There are improvements in the health of young people while they are at the home, including healthier diets, improved personal hygiene and a better understanding of medical and health issues. Young people are protected by well-managed medication procedures.

Young people's health needs are supported by staff who have a good awareness of health issues relating to the lifestyles of young people. Staff liaise with local and specialist agencies, including the looked after children nurse, mental health services and community health agencies.

This knowledge and networking gives useful consultation for staff and a variety of additional support to young people.

Young people like the food and enjoy helping to cook. Healthy eating is promoted, menus are varied, discussed with young people and include choice. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals and are encouraged to develop an understanding of healthy eating, which also promotes their independence and life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of young people is placed in high priority and young people are safe, secure and there are improvements in their welfare and behaviour. There are robust procedures in place to ensure that staff are thoroughly checked. Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people.

Staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures. Young people are protected by clear procedures and practices for promoting their welfare. Staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all young people are kept safe and receive appropriate support. There are good risk assessments and management strategies in place. Issues arising from this inspection demonstrated that young people's concerns about their safety are responded to and addressed. Staff are fully aware of who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

Young people enjoy their own private space, but raised concerns about how staff write everything down. Observations and inspection of records on this inspection demonstrated that recording in the home is appropriate and confidentiality and privacy of young people is respected. There is an anti-bullying policy and staff present a good understanding of group dynamics and present a commitment to challenging behaviour. Young people are protected by and have used the clear written complaints procedure.

There is a written behaviour management policy. Young people are enabled to manage and improve their behaviour by staff who are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. Staff promote clear boundaries, expectations and there is a clear focus on rewarding positive and improved behaviour. Staff are proud of the improvements and achievements of young people. Records are generally well-maintained, but there is lack of clarity between how two central logs for the use of physical intervention are used.

The physical environment is well-maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety. Fire safety procedures are checked and monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people with a variety of needs and from different backgrounds are supported and encouraged to engage, enjoy and achieve in both educational and leisure activities.

Young people's needs are assessed on an individual basis and appropriate support is afforded to each young person. Staff have a good awareness about diversity and the needs of young people. Key workers show a good level of commitment and coordinate support for young people,

provide individual key working sessions and liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised individual needs.

The staff provide a clear and enthusiastic commitment to supporting and encouraging young people to enjoy and achieve in both education, leisure activities and overall personal development. Staff maintain connections with local mainstream schools and local authority education and employment agencies in order to provide young people with individual education plans, tailored to their needs, abilities and age. Staff provide a clear commitment and flexible approach to exploring ways to best motivate young people. Staff are keen to encourage young people to engage in opportunities that will enable them to progress in their achievements, develop skills, build confidence and facilitate a meaningful transition into young adulthood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are looked after by staff who show a good awareness of their needs which are recorded with practical day-to-day care strategies in comprehensive placement care plans.

Staff place value on the views and opinions of the young people, who are involved and consulted about their placements and their plans for the future. They are encouraged to read and sign their placement care plans and discuss their needs, views and wishes. Young people are also given the opportunity to attend meetings, including statutory reviews with their social worker. Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with families and friends are well-recorded and supported by the manager and staff at the home.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to the running of the home and their placements by attending young people's meetings, having detailed key working sessions and quality time with staff. Young people say they get on well with their key workers and feel supported by the staff.

Young people are supported when they move into the home. There is an admissions procedure and a young people's guide. There are clear processes to help young people leave the home in a supportive and positive way.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Opportunities to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living are well supported by the staff. Staff present an excellent commitment to and knowledge of preparing young people both practically and emotionally to live independently. Although young people living at the home are not currently involved in specific programmes, there are practical independence plans available and these with consistent support from staff have enabled other young people to successfully move onto independent living in the community. Young people are encouraged to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic wellbeing.

Young people live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The lounges, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms are well furnished, well decorated and present a homely environment for young people.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provides information about the home.

Young people are cared for by a staff team with good levels of experience and training. The rota shows effective levels of staffing and provides time for daily handover meetings, regular team meetings and staff supervision. Each shift has a designated shift leader and there are clear lines of roles and responsibilities. Staff training is well organised. There is a clear induction process, staff supervision is regular and core training is available to and completed by all staff.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Discussion with staff show they are open to the different needs, experiences and backgrounds of young people. The staff team provide a clear commitment and backdrop of care to meet the needs of the young people currently living at the home.

Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well-organised and shows a clear record of each young person's progress.

The home's monitoring processes include thorough and detailed Regulation 33 visits. The manager monitors the running of the home, including checks on records, maintaining staff supervision and responding to Regulation 33 reports. However there is no formal written record for the required Regulation 34 checks carried out by the manager.

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):

- Clarify the difference between restraint and physical intervention, with particular regard to breakaway techniques, and how these should be recorded in a dedicated bound and numbered book (NMS 22.8 and 22.9)
- Provide written evidence that Regulation 34 checks are carried out (NMS 33).