

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC051513
Inspector	Judith Longden
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Nottinghamshire County Council
Registered person address	Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall Loughborough Road, West Bridgford NOTTINGHAM NG2 7QP
Responsible individual	Helen Daft
Registered manager	Diane Elizabeth Beckitt
Date of last inspection	03/02/2014

Inspection date	23/07/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	no enforcement action since last inspection

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people make good progress given their starting points. They are achieving good outcomes in their education, relationships, and independence skills. They are beginning to take responsibility for their own health and risk taking behaviour is reducing.

Young people receive very good quality care that is well planned and based on the individual needs of the young person. They are involved in their care and the running of the home. Admissions to the home are well managed and this ensures placements are suitably matched. Regular, multi-agency, risk management meetings ensure placements remain suitable.

Young people are kept safe because staff understand triggers to behaviours and the individual vulnerabilities and risks young people pose. Effective multi-agency work ensures risky behaviours such as self-harm and absence from the home are substantially reducing. Behaviour is well managed and continues to improve and physical intervention is rarely used.

The management of the home is exceptionally strong and areas of weakness have been addressed; the home continues to improve. The staff team are experienced

and supported in their role. A key strength of this home is the team work within the home and excellent work in partnership with other agencies and organisations. This ensures very good quality care, safety and outcomes for young people. There are no breaches of regulation but one recommendation is made as a result of this inspection. However, this shortfall does not negatively impact on the welfare or safety of young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a local authority and provides care for four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
29/08/2013	Full	good
15/01/2013	Interim	good progress
01/08/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting. This is in relation to ensuring the gas installation annual check is completed, having just expired. (NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress in achieving positive outcomes in all areas. Their progress is clearly recorded and evidenced in monthly reports. This enables young people to identify the progress they have made, and helps improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people enjoy a varied diet and help plan the menu, prepare and cook the meals. This means they learn practical skills in shopping, menu planning and cooking. Young people are encouraged and supported to understand the risks associated with alcohol and drug use. Key work sessions are utilised to discuss health issues such as self-harm and emotional well-being. This enables young people to understand the importance of a holistic healthy lifestyle and begin to take responsibility for their own health. As a result, risk taking behaviours of young people are reducing, and there has been a substantial decrease in self-harm behaviours.

Some young people have previously engaged in offending behaviour and have been subject to court orders and restorative justice programmes. These have enabled them to manage their feelings and learn from their actions. This has led to a significant reduction in offending behaviour.

Young people enjoy a range of activities in the home such as arts and crafts, garden games, and pool and film nights. Young people also attend youth club, go ice-skating, swimming and go to the cinema. This encourages their hobbies and interests and helps build their confidence.

Young people are achieving very good attendance and attainments in their education given their starting points. All young people are in full time education. One tutor said of a young person, 'they have a very good memory and good attention to detail, they take pride in their work and it is always presented neatly.' Young people's achievements are celebrated and this promotes their confidence and self-esteem and encourages them to achieve their educational potential.

Young people benefit from very good contact arrangements. Contact is supported by staff who work closely with the family and as result contact is increasing and young people benefit from improving relationships with their family.

Young people participate in an in-depth independence programme to learn practical skills such as shopping, cooking and budgeting. They also learn how to make appointments, register with a doctor and engage with professionals. Young people are encouraged to build appropriate social networks to enable them to deal with any issues of isolation and loneliness arising from independent living. This means young

people learn skills to help them prepare for adulthood.

Quality of care

good

At the time of the last inspection the home was experiencing a rise in incidents and negative behaviour as a result of disruption from a number of unplanned admissions. The home had not been able to undertake suitable matching assessments with existing young people in the home. The manager and local authority recognised the impact this was having on the young people and held a placement risk management meeting where the suitability of all placements was discussed and more appropriate placements identified to meet the needs of individual young people. This practice has continued with regular multi-agency placement risk management meetings being held to monitor the effectiveness of all the placements and the group dynamics to ensure young people are safe and achieving well in this home. This has led to a more settled home and staff feel able to meet the needs of young people. An independent reviewing officer stated, 'staff have a good understanding around children's needs and offer a protective environment.' Any potential new placements are also discussed and assessed for suitability. This ensures future placements are appropriately risk assessed and, where possible, emergency placements are kept to a minimum and placements are suitably planned.

Young people benefit from very good care management procedures. Good 'baseline plans' identify the abilities and skills of young people as well as their needs and targets. These inform the detailed care plans which identify how these targets will be met. Monthly action plans provide a focus for key work sessions with young people and their progress is recorded in a monthly review report. Young people are involved in all stages of their planning and care including attendance at their review meetings. Young people do not always wish to engage in formal house meetings and prefer to share their views on an informal and ad-hoc basis. Staff take the opportunity of meal times and group activities to ascertain the views of young people and involve them in planning the meals and future activities. Good use is made of key work to identify any issues or concerns young people have. As a result young people are engaged in their care and in the running of the home. An independent reviewing officer stated how they were impressed with the staff and said, 'they fully listened to the young person's wishes and feelings and supported the young person in their rise in independence.'

Young people understand how to make a complaint. These are recorded and the manager responds in writing. Appropriate action is taken to resolve the complaint. This means young people are aware their concerns are taken seriously.

Young people live in a family home environment which is well decorated and

maintained. The home and garden area has undergone substantial re-decoration and work continues in order to improve the facilities for young people. The home has a number of rooms for socialising and space for young people to be on their own. This enables young people to find quiet space away from other young people if they feel that tensions are rising in the home. Generally young people enjoy positive relationships with each other and with staff.

Staff attend training and work closely with other agencies and organisations to understand the issues of substance abuse and self-harm. They explore creative ways of engaging young people to explore these issues and promote their holistic health. Young people are provided with information and resources in order to make informed choices about their risky behaviours. Staff are trained in first aid and safe administration of medication. Written records of administration are clear and accurate and this means medication practice is safe.

Staff communicate effectively with a range of education providers. Young people benefit from tailored packages of education that include practical activities such as construction and music in addition to the curriculum subjects such as English and mathematics. This means the individual needs of young people are met and they are supported to reach their educational potential.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are supported to appropriately manage their feelings and frustrations and to recognise the impact that aggression has on others. Bullying is not tolerated and staff respond robustly to any incidents. This means bullying has reduced and behaviour has improved. Young people are fully involved in deciding the most appropriate sanction in response to any incidents of negative behaviour. This ensures they learn the consequences of their behaviour. The use of physical intervention is rare and where it is used it is appropriate and well recorded. Young people and staff take part in debriefs and evaluate the incident. This enables young people to understand the need for appropriate boundaries and helps them to understand that the staff are committed to keeping them safe.

The home has a range of policies and procedures to protect and safeguard young people. Young people who self-harm have individual risk assessments and detailed safety plans. These are developed in conjunction with other agencies and organisations, such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health, and reviewed regularly. This ensures a consistent and appropriate response to self-harm and has resulted in a substantial decrease in incidents.

The home has robust policies and procedures for managing absence from the home. Staff encourage the local police to visit the home and this has enabled them to establish positive relationships with the young people. These relationships provide a good foundation for police and staff to work with young people on understanding

triggers to going missing and how to prevent absence. When young people do go missing staff take the appropriate action and record the incident in very good detail. Young people are responded to positively when they return. This has resulted in a significant decrease in incidents of young people being missing or absent from the home.

Staff understand how to safeguard young people. Allegations and complaints about staff are referred to the relevant agencies and dealt with appropriately.

Young people are protected from unsuitable people gaining employment by a good recruitment process. Visitors to the home are asked to sign in and identification is checked. This further ensures young people are protected from significant harm.

The home has a variety of risk assessments for the building and equipment. Regular health and safety checks are completed to ensure the building is safe. However, the annual review of the gas installation was due during this inspection and this is currently in the process of being arranged. A recommendation is made to ensure this check is completed in a timely manner to keep young people safe. Young people and staff practice evacuation from the building. This means young people know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

good

Young people live in a home that continues to improve. Previous requirements and recommendations have been met and this has improved the quality of care for young people. One recommendation is made as a result of this inspection and the manager has already taken action to address this.

The home benefits from an exceptionally strong leadership and management team. The Registered Manager and the assistant manager are very experienced and suitably qualified. There is a very strong staff team, many have worked together for a long time and this fosters a consistent approach to the care of young people. One parent said, 'staff seem to work well together and have a good attitude.' Good team work extends beyond the home with a strong commitment to working with other agencies and organisations to ensure the best quality care, safety and outcomes for young people.

Staff are supported through good quality supervision and effective use of team meetings. Staff have the opportunity to progress within the home and take on additional responsibilities to enhance their skills. They are also able to undertake secondment opportunities to further their knowledge and experiences. Training is varied and appropriate to meet the needs of young people. This means staff are supported to continue to provide very good care and meet the diverse needs of young people.

The home has a good Statement of Purpose and young persons' guide. This means stakeholders, parents and young people aware of the aims of the home and the service provided. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has a revised and robust development plan in place to further improve the quality of service and outcomes for young people.

The monitoring by the manager is robust. A review and risk assessment of the home's location has been completed and this enables the manager to monitor any risks and ensure young people have access to the required services and facilities. The managers monitoring of the home has improved. The depth and quality of their review is good and, as a result, trends and patterns are identified to enable change. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home on a monthly basis and reports on their findings. These reports are sent to Ofsted as required. Significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.