

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC052744
Inspection date	11/10/2011
Inspector	Sonya Robinson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	28/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: 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.

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service provides residential accommodation for up to five looked after young people, all with complex emotional and behavioural needs. They provide care for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

The home is owned by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **satisfactory**.

Young people live in an environment that enables them to have positive outcomes in many areas of their lives. The home has created an atmosphere where young people and staff work together to make sure they are safe, solve problems, lead healthy lifestyles, enjoy learning and achieving, and gain skills in preparation for adult life. Young people are viewed positively by staff and seen as individuals with different needs. These needs are identified in written plans that outline how they will be met on a daily basis. There is a commitment from the staff and management team to support the individual needs of the young people.

Staff encourage young people to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the home is run. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat and what they do in their spare time.

As a result of this inspection, five requirements and four recommendations are made to ensure further safeguards for young people placed. These relate to a manager's application being received by Ofsted, staff training, documentation, general maintenance, young people's access to educational resources and protocol guidance about safeguarding.

Areas for improvementStatutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
24 (2001)	ensure records relating to complaints are appropriately maintained, including the action taken and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24(5))	30/11/2011
31	ensure that the home is kept in good structural repair	31/12/2011

(2001)	externally and internally and is reasonably decorated and maintained (Regulation 31 (2))	
2000	ensure that any person who manages an establishment shall be registered (Care Standards Act, S11 (1))	31/12/2011
5 (2001)	review and revise the statement of purpose and the children's guide (Regulation 5)	30/11/2011
30 (2001)	ensure a system is in place to notify without delay all authorities listed in schedule 5 of significant events. (Regulation 30 (1))	30/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning and have opportunities beyond the school day to engage in activities which promote learning, such as access to a computer within the home (NMS 8.2)
- ensure that the home has access to young people's placing authorities' child protection procedures and that any conflicts within them are discussed and resolved as far as possible with the local authority in which the home is situated (NMS 20.4)
- ensure that the children's home has a designated person, who is a senior manager, responsible for managing allegations (NMS 20.5)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. (NMS 18.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **satisfactory**.

Young people have a diverse staff team who provide them with individual support in order to develop confidence and a positive view of themselves. Key workers have knowledge of the background and individual needs of the young people and promote their confidence and understanding. Some positive and sensitive life story work is being undertaken with young people; this enables them to reflect on their time and experiences within a supportive environment. Health needs are identified within the placement plans and a range of services are available to support and address the individual needs of young people.

Education attendance and achievement are good in relation to individual ability for

some young people placed. For others, they have just commenced appropriate access courses and the home is liaising with local colleges to ensure that another young person can attend. Staff are consistent in supporting educational achievements. However, young people do not consistently have access to a computer or internet within the home to further their learning. The new manager is working with the staff team to enable young people to have good levels of support to ensure they attend school and positively address challenges and barriers to educational progress and achievement. This ensures preparation into adulthood and prepares young people for the wider world.

Young people benefit from appropriate good contact with family. At times, staff will supervise contact for some young people; this is managed in a sensitive manner to secure the required levels of safeguarding. Young people are supported to develop their independent living skills.

A new activities programme has been developed to provide purposeful opportunities for young people to develop new skills, with support and encouragement from staff. This enables young people to develop their confidence to complete daily living tasks safely and independently. Young people benefit from having access to the same services as their peers, to promote their participation and inclusion in the community, such as choir practice and American football. This enhances their self-worth, resilience and self-esteem.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **satisfactory**.

The consultation systems with young people are satisfactory; there are young people's meetings taking place alongside more informal discussions between staff and young people.

Young people are helped to develop socially acceptable behaviour by the use of praise and the implementation of boundaries. Young people know what standards of behaviour are expected and this has resulted in young people demonstrating an increasingly mature and responsible approach to how they conduct themselves.

The home tries to promote positive relationships with neighbours and the wider community and takes action to resolve any matters. Young people know how to make a complaint should they feel that this is necessary and that they can speak to their social worker or Ofsted directly if they wish. However, complaints records are not consistently completed with the outcome and action taken in response to the complaint.

Staff have an understanding of the young people's health needs and closely monitor young people to make sure they are healthy. They encourage young people to attend routine health checks, such as going to the dentist and optician. They also ensure young people get suitable medical advice and treatment when young people are feeling unwell or if they are concerned about young people's health and

development. Staff support young people to be active and take regular exercise, for example, by going to the gym.

The home's procedures for managing medication are put into practice to ensure young people's welfare is promoted and protected. Staff are trained in first aid and handling medication. They have a clear understanding of the home's procedures and a detailed knowledge of each young person's medication. Medication is securely stored. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions.

The new manager and staff are helping young people to enjoy and achieve in life. The individual needs of young people are identified, and specialist needs are met by external support as necessary. The management team is now stable which means young people receive consistent care from adults they know and with whom they can develop appropriate relationships.

Educational needs are met and special educational arrangements are made as necessary. Young people speak positively about their own arrangements and staff are involved in developing educational plans for each of them, with the relevant authorities. This means that young people are attending education specific to their needs.

Young people are encouraged to follow their particular interests, such as being part of a choir, playing chess, learning to play the piano, going to the cinema and playing football. As a result young people are able to build confidence in their abilities and experience different social and cultural backgrounds.

Young people live in a location, in easy reach of schools, leisure facilities, public transport and shops, that are important for their full development. The size, layout and design of the accommodation meet young people's needs. The home also has a regular maintenance programme in place. However, some parts of the home are showing signs of wear and tear; some laminate flooring has worn away or has disintegrated in parts, particularly on the ground floor, and kitchen units and work surfaces are chipped or damaged. A number of doors have been damaged by young people and parts of the home look a little bare and less homely. This has all been identified by the new manager who has already 'flagged' these issues up to senior management for action.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **satisfactory** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people say that they have not always got on and this has caused some difficulties with behaviour and bullying issues previously. Staff and young people feel that this is now much improved and that currently there are no concerns in this area. Young people say that they now feel more comfortable in the home and that they feel protected and safe. Young people said that they were able to identify an adult to

talk to if they felt the need or had concerns. Information about bullying is included in written information given to young people as well as being displayed around the home.

The safety and rights of young people and staff are protected. Potential issues of a safeguarding nature are referred to appropriate external agencies for investigation. The home has its own safeguarding procedures which staff are familiar with. However, staff were unable to locate safeguarding procedures from other placing authorities and the home is yet to appoint a designated person to whom staff can go to about safeguarding concerns.

The home has systems in place to deal with young people who go missing from care, which are underpinned by policy, procedure and staff guidance. The home has developed links and protocols with the local police. Incidents are recorded appropriately, and records show that young people are offered access to their social worker or an independent visitor upon their return. Records show that young people are generally maintaining contact with the staff while missing from home by mobile phone. This shows that good progress is being made in this area to help keep young people safe.

Sanctions are used fairly and any implemented fall within the remit of the standards. Incidents of physical intervention are being appropriately recorded. Behaviour management is monitored by the new manager to ensure that it is fair, reasonable and proportionate.

The recruitment, selection and vetting procedure ensures that suitable staff are employed to work with young people. There is also a robust system to ensure all visitors are vetted to further reduce risks of harm.

Health and safety procedures are effectively utilised in the home. This extends to staff following fire safety regulations including carrying out adequate fire drills and having a fire risk assessment that they are required to follow.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **satisfactory**.

Since the last inspection the home has a new manager, who has been in post for some weeks. As such the service has undergone a period of unsettlement and change. Under the Care Standards Act 2000 the organisation is required to register managers with Ofsted; this process has yet to commence. The manager is working with the staff group to review policies, procedures and practice, and has implemented an action plan. There are signs of improvement within the service, as staff and young people say that things are more settled and social workers who place within the service have stated that communication is good. The organisation has a business plan which includes an improvement agenda and staff training for the near future. This means that they want to improve their service and the outcomes of young people in their care.

The home is monitored by a representative of the organisation. This provides young people and staff with an opportunity to discuss any issues they may have about living at the home. In addition, the manager monitors systems at the home to ensure that the needs of young people are met.

At the last inspection in March 2011 six recommendations were made. All have been addressed and there have been improvements in documenting room searches, regular monthly monitoring of the home, and bullying awareness has been raised through the further development of the home's policy and staff training. Young people who go missing from the home are offered access to an independent person upon their return and young people have access to age-appropriate games and DVDs. This has ensured that there are further safeguards in place for the young people.

Staff have access to a rolling programme of training. However, not all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People, and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma.

The home has a Statement of Purpose and a young person's guide; these set out the aims of the home and how it will operate. However, the new manager and the management team are reviewing the way forward for the home, and the manager is also updating the young person's guide, particularly regarding equality and diversity. This is good practice and demonstrates the commitment of this manager.

Staff are supported by the manager and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. They confirm that when they need support and guidance the manager is helpful. Staff are supported on a daily basis; they are also receiving one-to-one supervision. This is to monitor their performance, accountability and identify their individual development needs.

Team meetings take place regularly every month to allow the staff team to discuss and review individual young people, the running of the home, and look at ways to improve the service they offer.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who have a range of skills and experience. The staff team reflects the cultural backgrounds of the young people living in the home and provides both positive male and female role models for young people. The numbers of staff on duty meet the needs of young people. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and appointments.

There are systems in place to notify relevant authorities of significant events that may occur within the home or with the young people. However, Ofsted was recently omitted when such an event occurred, although all other relevant agencies were notified. This did not have a detrimental effect on the outcome for the young person.

The home's written records provide information regarding young people's needs,

development and progress. Young people's records are organised and contain relevant documents from placing authorities. This ensures that there are satisfactory systems in place to promote the welfare of the young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.