

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061232
Inspection date	15/06/2011
Inspector	Thomas Webber
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	26/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people, male and female, aged 13 to 17 years at any one time who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is managed by the local authority. The purpose and function of the home is to return young people to their parental home or to identified foster placements.

The premises are situated on a large estate surrounded by similar style family homes. The home is a purpose-built property which is well resourced.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides an excellent level of care which means that the outcomes for young people are good to outstanding. Young people appreciate the care and support they receive from a very committed and dedicated staff team and enjoy living at the home. Young people continue to make good progress; they thrive within a warm, supportive and caring environment. Young people's needs and views are central to the development and operation of the home. Robust safeguarding practices promote the safety and welfare of young people who feel safe and comfortable living at the home. There is an excellent emphasis which supports young people to develop both socially and educationally. Effective management ensures that good use is made of a range of monitoring activities relating to the quality of care provided to continually improve outcomes for young people. However, areas for development include the need to review the continued use of the closed circuit television; the supervision and appraisals of staff as well as the monitoring visits made to the home.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
33 (2001)	ensure that interviews are routinely held with young people and staff and their views are reflected within the reports in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided	31/07/2011

	(Regulation 33 (4)(a))	
33 (2001)	ensure that copies of the Regulation 33 reports are routinely supplied to Ofsted. (Regulation 33 (5)(a))	31/07/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the continued use of the closed circuit television surveillance within the home is reviewed (NMS 10.5)
- ensure that the quality of performance of staff is comprehensively reflected in their supervision and appraisals records. (NMS 19.4 & 6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are assisted to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They benefit from individual support which helps them to develop a positive view of themselves. Staff actively encourage and assist young people to develop their own identities whilst recognising the identities of others. Staff demonstrate a very strong commitment in supporting the needs of young people with significant progress having been achieved. The home's expectations, rules and routines provide young people with an environment that focuses on positive outcomes.

Young people are actively supported and given every opportunity to achieve their educational ambitions. Young people attend various educational placements which are tailored to meet their individual needs. Clear routines are well established which support young people to achieve excellent school attendance. Young people are provided with suitable facilities to engage in private study and staff actively support them with any homework.

Staff are very committed to maintaining the level of agreed contact between young people and their families according to their individual circumstances. Practical support is also offered by staff to transport and take the lead role in any supervised contact arrangements. Systems are well established which enable young people to make and receive telephone calls as well as to meet with any visitors in private.

Young people are fully supported to develop independent living skills as part of their transition to adulthood. They are able to develop budgeting skills as well as undertaking the shopping, preparation and cooking of meals. Young people confirmed these arrangements and stated that they are also involved in the cleaning of the home as well as doing their own washing.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in an environment where warm, caring and supportive relationships exist between themselves and staff. Young people are extremely appreciative about the care and support provided to them and their experience of living at the home. The dedicated staff team undertake their duties in a warm, supportive and professional manner. Young people are extremely relaxed and at ease in their company and within their environment. Young people feel safe and comfortable living at the home.

Young people are fully supported to achieve an active lifestyle which helps to keep them healthy. They are supported and encouraged to participate in a range of activities both within the home and in the wider community. Staff also fully promote the personal interests of young people. Holidays and various trips are also organised to enhance their experiences.

Young people are supported to eat a healthy, varied and balanced diet. They are fully consulted in the menu planning process. They are also provided with opportunities to try meals from a variety of cultures. Young people are very happy with the quality and quantity of meals provided. They are given opportunities to be involved in the preparation and cooking of the meals.

The home operates an open culture of consultation where young people are fully encouraged to contribute to and influence the way the home is run. Young people's meetings are held at regular intervals which provides them with opportunities to raise and discuss any issues of concern and make any suggestions. Young people are also able to make their views known on a daily basis and through their individual key worker sessions.

Clear policies and procedures are well established for dealing with complaints. Young people understand how to complain and are fully supported to raise any concerns openly. This was confirmed in discussions with them. The home has received no complaints since the last inspection. Previous records show that all complaints are well recorded, responded to and addressed without delay.

Young people are well cared for in line with their placement plans. These provide staff with clear guidance on how to effectively meet young people's day-to-day needs. Young people are fully aware and contribute to their placement plans. These plans clearly reflect the strengths and needs of young people and effectively address the placement objectives.

Young people's healthcare needs are fully met. They are registered with the local services and are fully supported to access any healthcare appointments. Specialist intervention is provided to those young people who require specific input. Young people's health care histories and needs are well-documented. They are fully supported to access a range of information, advice and support regarding a range of other health care issues. Appropriate systems are established for the safe storage, receipt, administration and disposal of unwanted medication.

Staff fully promote the education of young people to ensure that they attain their

educational potential. They also celebrate the successes of young people. Staff attend young people's school reviews as well as parents' evenings and other special events. Good communication and liaison is maintained between the home and young people's educational placements.

The home's design and location is suitable for its stated function. It provides young people with excellent facilities and is maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. It is also well furnished and in good decorative order. The home provides young people with good communal facilities to meet their individual and collective needs. They are provided with their own bedrooms with en-suite facilities, which are personalised to their own tastes. All bedroom doors are fitted with appropriate locks and young people have now been given their own key to their bedrooms. The home provides good bath, shower and toilet facilities to meet the needs of the home and suitable locks are fitted to these doors to promote the privacy and dignity of young people. The manager intends to review the continued use of closed circuit television surveillance.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and comfortable living at the home. They feel confident in discussing any concerns or worries with staff. Young people genuinely feel that staff care about them and their welfare. Staff respond promptly and appropriately to any allegations or suspicions of harm. The home maintains an open and supportive dialogue with young people, their respective placing social workers and the local safeguarding team. A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures together with their contact details are readily available to staff. Staff receive regular training which focuses on the protection of young people.

A clear system is well established for the reporting and recording of any event where young people go missing. These include agreed protocols with the local police. There have been no incidents, where young people have gone missing, since the last inspection. However, previous records show that staff respond positively to any absence. This ensures the safe return of young people at the earliest opportunity.

Effective measures are taken to protect young people from bullying. A clear anti-bullying policy is established which is conveyed to young people. Although young people do not currently see bullying as a major area of concern, records indicate that there have been a few minor incidents. However, staff take prompt and positive action to deal with these.

Young people live in a calm and settled environment where they are supported to develop positive behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans and various risk assessments are well established. These provide staff with clear strategies for managing young people's behaviour. The level of negative behaviour continues to be reduced with positive behaviour being supported and suitably rewarded. There is a minimum use of sanctions and physical intervention. Debrief sessions are held with young people in respect to any restraint used. These provide young people with the opportunity to reflect on their presenting behaviour and consider alternative strategies to manage their feelings and frustrations.

Robust staff recruitment practices are established to ensure the protection of young people. These practices ensure that new staff are suitably vetted and do not commence employment in the home until all the relevant checks have been carried out.

Health and safety policy and practice guidelines are well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified from a tour of the building. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living at a home which is very well managed by a registered manager who is suitably qualified and experienced. The registered manager demonstrates clear and effective leadership which ensures that young people enjoy stability and consistency of care. The manager is extremely approachable and supportive which is very much appreciated by the staff and young people.

The manager has successfully addressed the three requirements and three recommendations raised at the last inspection. However, the continuing use of closed circuit television surveillance is to be reviewed as it does not reflect the aims of the home and the needs of the young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose clearly outlines its aims and objectives. It also describes the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. This information is readily available to all interested parties. A young people's guide is also produced which provides them and their parents with clear information they need to know about the home. This information is usually provided to young people prior to their admission to the home.

The organisation ensures that monthly unannounced visits are undertaken to monitor the welfare and care provided to young people. Reports are produced outlining these visits and any actions needed to improve the outcomes for young people. However, these reports do not routinely reflect comments made by young people and staff about the care and welfare provided. Copies of these reports are also not routinely forwarded to Ofsted. The manager ensures that monthly Regulation 34 reports are completed as part of the quality of care review monitoring process. This is in addition to its yearly development plan which reflects action taken to improve the outcomes for young people.

Good staffing levels are maintained throughout the day and night to meet the individual and collective needs of young people. They are cared for by a very committed and stable staff team who have a variety of experience in the care of children and young people. Staff undertake a multi-purpose role in carrying out most aspects of care to young people which ensures they receive continuity and consistency.

Staff feel extremely well supported in their roles through regular formal and informal supervision, daily handovers, regular staff meetings and team planning days. These systems ensure that staff are kept up to date in all matters relating to the home and young people. However, the supervision and appraisal records of staff do not reflect the quality of supervision provided and their performance. These also do not identify any future and specific training needs of staff to assist with their ongoing personal development.

Young people are looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their individual and collective needs. Most staff are trained to the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff value the additional training opportunities provided to them to develop their knowledge,

expertise and competence. These include both mandatory and more specialist training. This is reflected in the care practice and positive outcomes achieved for young people which is very much appreciated by them.

Young people's records are complete and are stored securely Young people's placement plans also reflect their individual histories and needs. This information enables staff to effectively care for young people. Any significant events relating to the protection of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties. Staff ensure that young people's placing social workers are kept well informed and are regularly updated of their progress and well-being.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.