

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061810
Inspection date	06/12/2011
Inspector	Bill Drumm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	18/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

The home is run by the local authority and provides care and accommodation for up to six boys or girls aged between 12 and 17-years-old. The home is registered to care for young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people receive a good level of care. Relationships between staff and young people are warm, positive and based on mutual respect. Young people said they felt safe living at the home and that they have lots of activities to take part in and enjoy. Staff were positive about working at the home despite the fact that there are staffing vacancies waiting to be filled. All the young people have lived at the home for a considerable period of time and they have detailed care plans in place. Young people spoken to said they were making good progress.

Records of restraint and restraint procedures; the young people's guide to the home and the home's procedures for the safe handling and administration of medication all need to be reviewed and updated. Young people who are old enough do not have detailed pathway plans in place to aid their transition into adulthood.

The independent visitor to the home does not routinely seek the views of young people, members of staff and family members or relatives about how the home is run.

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
25 (2001)	ensure that at all times the home has a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home (Regulation 25 (1))	29/02/2012
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for that purpose (Regulation 17B (3))	29/02/2012

33 (2001)	interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	29/02/2012
--------------	---	------------

Recommendations

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

- contribute to the development of each young person's pathway plan and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal advisor in implementing the plan (NMS 12.2)
- ensure that, where there has been a physical restraint, the young person is given the opportunity to be medically checked afterwards (Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes; paragraph 2.12)
- review the young people's guide to the home to ensure it fully complies with national minimum standards (NMS 13.4)
- review the home's procedures for the safe handling and administration of medication. (NMS 6.14)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

'This home is great, it really is, it's fantastic.' These are the words a young person first said to me when they arrived home from school. The young person went onto say they felt comfortable at the home and could talk to anyone about anything if they wished. The young person also said, 'I have a key worker but I don't need to wait for them to be around.' The key worker system used in the home is well organised and effective and helps young people to achieve their agreed goals. Written records are maintained which show what has been discussed and what the outcomes of those discussions are. Members of staff are fully aware of each young person's strengths and they provide a supportive, warm and enthusiastic environment in which young people can develop their self-confidence and flourish. Activities which young people have enjoyed include attending dance and drama classes, going to the house of their friend for tea, a charity bag packing session at a local supermarket and joining neighbours on the local beach to help clean it up. Young people are fully involved in their local community. This helps them to learn new things, grow in confidence and to develop their self-esteem.

There is a good approach to promoting the health and well-being of young people. Staff members have developed a positive relationship with the local looked after children nurse who attends staff meetings to offer help and advice. The manager

described the looked after children nurse as a good resource, particularly in relation to sexual health and if young people are trying to give up smoking. Young people enjoy a wide variety of different foods, which includes food from other nationalities and cultures. One young person said the food was nice. Young people are actively encouraged to take regular exercise and are supported to take part in all activities offered within the home. This helps them to stay healthy, fit and well.

Young people receive a consistently high level of help and support to learn new skills and to develop their independence. All the young people at the home learn independence skills and activities for daily living. Young people are able to plan, budget, purchase food items and cook meals. One young person said, 'I'm encouraged to be independent, and to do as much as I can for myself.' Photographs on display within the home show another young person participating in the cooking of a full Sunday roast dinner. Members of staff support and encourage young people to understand puberty, changes in their bodies and the need to maintain good personal hygiene. This helps to prepare them fully for adult life.

The education and training of young people living at the home is given an exceedingly high priority. The home has a dedicated education coordinator whose role, is to be a central contact point for all education providers. This ensures all young people receive the support they need to attend school or training, any problem areas are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken. The attendance of young people at school or training is closely monitored and their attendance is consistently high. Young people are encouraged to achieve their maximum potential and to achieve the best possible life chances.

Quality of care

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

The home provides a warm, comfortable and supportive environment in which young people can develop both physically and emotionally. Young people have detailed care plans in place. Regular monitoring of care plans enables members of staff to evaluate the care they provide and to identify any changes which may be necessary. One young person said, 'I've moved on since coming here. I still have anger issues but they're nowhere near as bad as they used to be. I know staff are trying to help me but sometimes I just can't help myself.' The individual needs of young people continue to be met and they are able to develop self-confidence.

Some young people at the home take prescribed medication. The medication is kept under regular review by the relevant medical practitioner and written records are maintained at the home. The records were examined and recent changes to one young person's prescription were not fully documented. This means the young person could be given the wrong dose of medication. Young people lead an active, healthy lifestyle and take regular exercise. This helps them to stay fit and well.

Members of staff display a friendly and committed approach to caring for young people. This helps young people to feel safe and secure. A fruit bowl was freely

available for young people to access if they wish. Any young people who are ill or suffer accidents are quickly attended to. The home has a positive approach to working in partnership with health care professionals. Each young person's health needs are recorded in their health care plan.

The home has a thorough, detailed and clear admissions process for young people. Members of staff work hard to ensure each young person enjoys a positive, worthwhile experience whilst living at the home and is able to develop socially, physically and emotionally. One young person said, 'staff are great, they talk to us and treat us as equals.' This helps young people feel safe and secure and to achieve their potential.

The home has a complaints process in place and young people are encouraged to voice their concerns. There have been no complaints made at the home since the last inspection. Members of staff said they listen to what young people have to say and that they try to resolve any issues they might have promptly. Young people are fully able to make their needs known and to raise formal complaints if they are unhappy about anything. This helps them to feel safe and listened to.

Young people enjoy being able to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities, which include attending dance and drama classes, visits to local leisure centres, and fishing. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as comfortable and personal as possible. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. One young person said, 'it's ok here. There are loads of things to do outside, I sometimes just sit and want to watch TV though which I can.' The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can socialise, enjoy a meal together and talk informally. This helps young people to develop their confidence and social skills.

Relationships between members of staff and young people are very warm and friendly. Members of staff strive to provide an environment in which young people can be safe and happy. Young people feel comfortable at the home and understand that members of staff are there to help them.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are systems in place within the home to safeguard young people. Risk assessments have been carried out in the home and these are regularly monitored and updated in line with changing circumstances or behaviours of young people. Young people are protected and kept safe from harm. There have been a small number of occasions when young people has been missing from the home. The home has policies and procedures for dealing with missing children. Young people are responded to appropriately on their return. In addition, the home's manager has met with the local police to devise a strategy for dealing with reports of young people who go missing. The strategy and new working practices ensure that time is not wasted and that looking for missing young people can take place quickly.

There have been no safeguarding concerns at the home since the last inspection. One young person said, 'I feel safe here.' The manager and all members of staff are trained in safeguarding. This helps to keep young people safe and protected from potential abuse.

Members of staff promote positive behaviour within the home and each young person has a behaviour management plan in place. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their actions. Where necessary restorative techniques are used, with young people writing letters of apology or undertaking extra chores. Where absolutely necessary, sanctions are used to help promote positive behaviour. The use of restraint or holding of young people within the home is seldom used. Written records of any restraints used do not fully comply with regulations. The full details of the reasons why a restraint was necessary are not recorded. This means, the manager will be unable to review the records in order to identify any patterns of behaviour or the circumstances why restraint was needed. Also staff should ensure that, where there has been a physical restraint, the young person is given the opportunity to be medically checked afterwards.

The home's manager ensures that all safety checks needed within the home are undertaken to ensure the safety of young people, visitors and members of staff. The manager also ensures that appropriate and regular checks of the home's fire systems, smoke detectors and emergency lighting are carried out. Young people understand the fire evacuation process and practise fire drills including those at night. Full written records are maintained by the home's manager. Risk assessments are available with regard to the general building and also in relation to the young people themselves. Risk assessments are clear and reviewed regularly. Therefore, young people live in a safe environment and their safety is protected.

Young people are protected by the home's recruitment procedures and are kept safe from potential abuse. The home's recruitment process is thorough and helps to ensure that only those who are suitable to work with young people are employed. Visitors to the home are asked to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitor's book.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives set out in its Statement of Purpose. The Statement of Purpose clearly describes the skills, qualifications and experience members of staff have in looking after young people.

The young people's guide to the home is clearly written and provides important information which young people may need. However, the young people's guide does not include the up to date contact details of the current regulatory body. Young people know what they can expect from living at the home, but not how to contact the regulatory body if they are worried or concerned about anything.

Young people's files are detailed and well ordered. Written information retained within the home provides a record of each young person's life at the home as well as the help and support carried out by staff members. Each young person's care is formally reviewed at regular intervals. Members of staff are aware of each young person's changing needs and who is responsible for ensuring they are met. House meetings involving the young people take place at regular intervals and their opinions are listened to. Young people and staff members discuss activities that the young people may wish to try as well as different meals they might like to sample. Young people also made their opinions known about the time at which the independent visitor to the home usually arrived. The young people were instrumental in having these times changes so as not to interfere with their mealtimes. This helps young people to feel listened to and to have some control over their daily lives.

Monitoring visits from someone independent of the home take place every month. The person undertaking these visits does not routinely talk with young people, their parents or relatives or members of staff. These visits help to ensure that the home is run properly and that young people are well cared for. The opinions of family members is not borne in mind. Young people, and those important to them, do not contribute to improving the quality of the care provided.

The organisation demonstrates a commitment to training. Members of staff receive training in a number of areas which help to safeguard and protect the welfare of young people. Written records indicate that, where training is not up to date, renewal dates have been identified and a plan is in place to ensure staff attendance. The home does not have a full complement of staff. This means some activities with young people may not take place because there are not enough staff on duty. The home's manager carries out formal, written supervision of staff members. Members of staff feel listened to and have a confidential process for raising any concerns or anxieties they may have. Regular, detailed staff meetings are held. This helps staff members to feel part of a team and supported in their work.

The home's manager provides effective management and has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Any problem areas which may be identified are attended to and appropriate action taken. The home has a development plan in place. The home's owners, the manager and members of staff are fully aware of the home's strengths and weaknesses.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.