

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC061837
Inspection date	06/11/2013
Inspector	Martha Nethaway
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/11/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned home offers services for up to four children and young people, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

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

The effectiveness with which the home provides well planned care is good. Outcomes for young people are good. Young people are reaching their full potential in their school life. They are keeping themselves fit and healthy. Young people learn important life skills in developing positive relationships with family, friends, teachers and staff. They are developing a more positive rapport with adults around them.

Young people are very confident with sharing their views with staff. They regularly attend 'house meetings' and they use this time to share ideas and interact with peers and staff. Young people feel involved because they influence decisions about food, activities and the décor of the home.

The quality of the working relationships between staff and young people is good. Staff are supportive and nurturing in their approach. They enjoy working with young people and are able to motivate them to succeed.

Leadership and management are good. They know the home's strength and areas for improvement. The home is fostering good outcomes for young people. Staff are well motivated and have the right strategies to help young people achieve and develop in their lives. Leaders and managers are prepared to make further changes through the investment in staff training and increased responsibility and performance. As a result, young people's continuity of care is benefiting because staff are trained to be skilful in supporting young people with complex needs.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are making good progress in relation to their development. They are beginning to reason and think in a logical way. Young people show interest in people and show a willingness to understand the concept of rules. One young person commented, 'How I am now and how I relate to others is very different to when I first came to live at the home.'

Young people enjoy good health; they are physically active and eat well. They visit their doctor and other health services. This means that all health matters and any difficulties are not going undetected. One young person commented, 'I use to smoke when I first came here, now I don't and this is because staff see it as very unhealthy.' In addition, all young people have a personalised health plan so that all medical issues are addressed as they arise. This is complemented with good support from an external therapist. This in turn ensures that therapeutic support is available to help young people to make sense of their experiences. As a result, young people are positively developing their self-esteem, resilience and trust in others.

All young people are either in mainstream or specialist schools or college. At the home, young people have access to separate, well equipped room for education including using computers. Young people are motivated to achieve well in their education. They enjoy exceptionally high attendance. Young people express a real interest in their education. They dedicate time to doing their homework and studying. One young person commented, 'Today I took an English exam and I feel confident it went well.' Another young person commented, 'I am liked and respected by my teachers and school friends.'

Young people's active participation and engagement is encouraged. This is through one to one meetings with staff. This is used as a base to explore how to get on better with others. This partnership relationship is encouraged to help achieve the best outcomes for young people. Young people also take part in weekly 'house meetings' so that they can discuss any issues with the running of the home. Young people say they have had direct input into the décor, furnishings, menus and activities. One young person commented, 'We recently decorated one room with a mural which is a piece of art work of a tree.'

Young people enjoy maintaining contact with their family and friends. Where there are any risks posed by contact, staff always take action to keep young people safe. Young people enjoy a combination of direct contact such as visits, phone calls and using e-technology. Over time the development of improved relationships is clearly evident. As a result, this is helping young people to keep in touch and offering reassurance through building positive and supportive relationships. They benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them.

For older young people, support is paced to help develop their independent living skills. From an early stage, young people are encouraged to take personal responsibility for cleaning their bedroom and managing their laundry. Later they develop skills related to cooking and budgeting. In some cases, young people travel

independently to college. Young people are being prepared and supported through identifying their strengths and their needs for the future. One social worker commented, 'The young person is now very mature and has gone onto college. We are planning properly for the future.'

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive working relationships with staff. Staff act as good role models and work towards building positive relationships with young people. When young people experience strong mood swings and unpredictable behaviour, staff are there to support them. As a result, over time, young people begin to develop positive social behaviours.

Care planning is well organised and implemented. The home's placement plans are easy to understand, they record needs and the actions that staff take to minimise risks. Staff support young people's health, social and emotional growth. Staff are warm, engaging and responsive to young people's needs. This allows young people to make emotional connections with staff. Staff invest time and attention so that they can directly influence young people's behaviour. Staff embed opportunities throughout a young person's day. For example, by positive comments and feedback related to school, college, activities and behavioural targets.

Young people are confident with sharing their views. They frequently use the complaints process when they are unhappy. All complaints are dealt with quickly, sensitively and professionally. Staff learn from complaints. They have made improvements with how behaviour is managed between young people. This ensures that the voice of young people remains at the heart of the work at the home.

Staff provide support for a range of activities. Young people say they enjoy going to the cinema, swimming, rock climbing, shopping and meeting with friends. One young person commented, 'Tonight, I am going as a volunteer leader at a local youth club. This has given me great confidence and to act responsibly.'

Young people's needs relating to their cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. Staff ensure that activities build on positive cultural identity. For example, through food, music and literature. Staff serve as mentors and help young people to appreciate cultural diversity within the home.

The home is in a rural location, although within a short distance to a local village. The home is spacious in design and retains a homely feel. All young people enjoy their own bedroom where they can go for privacy and time on their own. There is ample shared space including a large kitchen and lounge area. One young person commented, 'It is big and spacious.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they are safe and feel safe. Staff are up to date with their safeguarding, child protection and staff allegation training. In addition, they have completed Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) training, this July and October 2013. This ensures that staff know and understand the correct steps to take when they are concerned about a young person's welfare. As a result, staff are able to carry out their role safely and effectively, in practice.

Since the last inspection, there have been no incidences of young people go missing. This is attributed to clear preventative work and the proper assessment of levels of risk. This is not viewed in isolation. Young people learn about awareness of the risks, including those surrounding going missing.

Some young people's behaviour can be extremely challenging. They can display more challenging behaviour at the early stages of living at the home, or occasionally when young people's circumstances become unsettled. However, over time young people overcome this difficulty and their behaviour improves. Staff work hard to implement de-escalation strategies and help establish behaviour expectation. A recent initiative now focuses on young people taking responsibility and making amends. For example, using a written reflective account when young people's behaviour is unacceptable. This increases young people's ability to address conflict, build understanding and strengthen relationships with others.

Staff selection and recruitment is sound. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are safe to work with vulnerable young people.

Health and safety is given a good priority by staff. Leaders and managers ensure that the home's risk assessments are up to date. All young people have a documented risk assessment that is reviewed in light of any changes to their circumstances. In addition, young people learn the steps to take in the event of a fire drill and an emergency evacuation. These proactive steps ensure that young people's safety and welfare is promoted.

Leadership and management

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

This home is well managed. There is a permanently employed registered manager, although they are away on planned maternity leave. The company has made suitable interim managerial arrangements and has kept Ofsted fully informed. Ofsted have not received any complaints about the home since the last inspection.

The home has an up to date Statement of Purpose, which is implemented effectively. Partnership working with parents, social workers, the therapist and educational coordinator is a key cornerstone of practice at the home.

The home has addressed the previous two recommendations from the last inspection. Staff have been provided with bespoke training related to the 'Residential Skills' programme. This covers a spectrum of the right skills training to support young people with complex and challenging needs. Staff say that the changes as a result of the training include reduced serious incidents involving young people. Staff have ensured that young people are taking part in more formal activities both local and afar. Young people's hobbies and interests are being developed. As a result, this enables young people to increase their social skills and confidence.

The home has in place a development plan and is on track with its implementation. The manager commented, 'The home has had a period of consolidation. We have concentrated on employing long term permanent staff, introduced new job descriptions, appraisal, and supervision to increase accountability. This is about increasing the professionalism of the staff group as a team.'

The deployment of staff is well organised. Each shift includes at least a team manager or senior residential worker. Hand-overs are well structured so that staff are communicating effectively as a staff group with young people. Just over half the team are formally qualified to work in residential care. The remaining staff are registered and undertaking their training. Staff say there is good quality on-going professional training which also includes a mandatory programme of training. They rate the quality and usefulness of the training highly. As a result, young people's continuity of care is being supported by well trained staff.

The management of records is good. Young people's progress is tracked, over time improvement takes place with their health, education and behaviour. Young people are encouraged to read their file and they know their plans for the future.

The home's notification system is suitable. Leaders and managers have an effective working relationship with local authorities, social workers, police and health professionals. All significant events show that actions are taken to promote the welfare of young people at all times.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.