

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063110
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House Russell Road IPSWICH IP1 2BX
Responsible individual	Clifford Martin James
Registered manager	Nina Penelope Clark
Date of last inspection	03/10/2013

Inspection date	26/06/2014
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Previous inspection	adequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	adequate
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The home provides good care that adequately meets young people's individual needs and promotes their safety and welfare. Young people benefit from sound attachments to staff. Staff know young people well and embrace their unique characteristics.

Most young people express their views at the home with confidence; they say that they feel safe, get on well with the staff team and show some acceptance of one another's differences.

As a result of this inspection there are four statutory requirements and four recommendations raised as areas for improvement. These include shortfalls in relation to; the behaviour management records, recording complaints, maintaining the décor of the home to a high standard and monitoring the home. Recommendations have been raised in relation to negative influences, records of supervision; key working and community activities.

The home has undergone significant changes over recent months. This has impacted positively on young people's care and the quality of care has improved since the last inspection.

The home has a new manager who maintains a focus on young people's experiences of the care. The manager is evaluating the procedures in the home and staff practice to identify further areas for improvements.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged between 11 and 16 years, who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home accepts both planned and emergency placements and is owned by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/10/2013	Full	adequate
07/08/2013	Full	inadequate
07/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
29/06/2012	Full	adequate

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

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
24 (2001)	ensure that a written record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response and the outcome of the investigation (Regulation 24 (5))	06/07/2014
34 (2001)	ensure there is a system for improving the quality of care provided in the children's home shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities (Regulation 34 (1)(b)(3))	06/07/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, discipline or restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a	06/07/2014

	volume kept for the purpose which shall include all matters set out in Regulation 17B (3)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i))	
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained. (Regulation 31 (2) (b) (d) (e))	07/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time dates and lengths of each supervision held for each member of staff (NMS 19.5)
- support young people to take part in age appropriate peer activities as agreed with the home's staff in a way similar to how a reasonable parent might reach agreement with their children (NMS 7.5)
- ensure all staff's work is consistent with these Regulations and NMS, the home's policies and procedures, in respect of recording regular key work sessions with young people (NMS 21.3)
- actively promote the welfare of children living in the home, with specific regard to minimising issues of negative peer influences and items going missing. (NMS 4.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **adequate**

Young people have mixed feelings about being at the home. They have developed a rapport with staff and benefit from individual quality time and key working sessions. This has helped them to build fundamental attachments.

Young people have access to the health services they need. Staff offer support for young people to stop smoking and identify specific support for their psychological health. They are encouraged to take part in physical activities, eat a balanced diet and take responsibility for promoting their good health.

Most young people have a routine around their educational provision this gives them a structure and routine to their day. Attendance in education is a significant improvement for some young people who have previously faced barriers to attendance.

Young people regularly see family and those adults important to them. Staff support and facilitate contact. Professionals say that staff are flexible and resourceful in the promotion of contact.

Young people are able to take part in some activities provided by staff although opportunities to participate in community-based activities are very limited and therefore few young people build social networks outside of the home.

Young people are supported well by staff with transition to and from the home. Social workers spoken to highlight the introduction to the home as particularly good. Young people are encouraged to build domestic skills they use public transport and think about personal safety helping them learn necessary skills as they prepare to leave the home.

Quality of care **good**

Staff are genuine and caring and provide good parenting parameters. Relationships between young people and staff are good. Dynamics between young people fluctuate, however, staff monitor this closely and are quick to intervene and support individuals. One social worker said 'I have worked with a lot of children's homes and feel they do a very good job.'

Staff actively encourage young people to share their views and have a voice in the home. Young people are active participants in meetings and confidently share their

views. This is in the knowledge that staff listen to their ideas and value their feedback.

There are a number of activities available, including pool; trips to the cinema, shopping, gardening and trips further afield during the school holidays. However, these are undertaken with staff. The uptake of activities or clubs within the community is minimal preventing young people from making friends outside of the home or school.

The care planning encompasses all needs and records individual's cultural, religious, ethnic and identity details. Each young person has a care plan. Key work sessions take place regularly although the records are missing in some files. The records provide an individualised picture of each young person and how staff support them in their daily lives.

The menu is healthy and balanced, meals are provided routinely and staff sit around the table and eat these with young people. This provides young people with social meal times and adult role models. Menus provide ample choice and food is freshly prepared by staff. This supports young people to eat well and benefit from a healthy diet.

The homes interior décor is mixed. Significant improvements have been made in regard to refurbishing the kitchen. This has worked well, young people generally eat around the table and spend time in the kitchen. Young people choose the décor for their bedrooms and personalise them to their own likes and themes. However, carpets and soft furnishings in the hallway are stained and torn. There are holes in the bathroom wall, the bathroom floors are grubby and a lack of ventilation has resulted in an unpleasant odour in the shower room. This does not promote a pleasant and clean environment for young people or help them take pride in their surroundings.

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Young people say that they feel reasonably safe in the home. However, the dynamics between young people are difficult. There are negative influences in the home including young people settling late and young people's belongings going missing. Staff responses to incidents are quick and proportionate this helps young people feel supported and cared for.

Behaviour management is generally consistent. There are no restraints and the approach of behaviour management from staff is non-punitive. This is emphasised by young people and social workers. Staff provide consequences for young people to help them learn from their actions. While these are generally appropriate the recording of these is poor and lacks basic details.

Staff have a good awareness of the child protection procedures and report concerns appropriately. Records are maintained regarding any accidents to young people in the home. This safeguards young people.

Individual risk assessments ensure that young people's safety is prioritised in accordance with their vulnerabilities and arrangements for free time. Staff work well with young people to minimise risk taking behaviour such as missing from the home. The number of missing from home incidents has decreased. These relate mainly to young people returning after agreed times. Staff know young people's whereabouts and are flexible in their collection of young people following free time to ensure their safety.

Staff recruited are checked prior to taking up post in line with the organisational procedures and policies. As a result of robust checks only those who are suitable to work with children are employed in the home.

The home provides a physically safe and appropriately secure environment. Young people have enough privacy and communal areas are spacious and accommodate all young people comfortably.

Leadership and management

good

There is a new Registered Manager who has been in post since May 2014. The manager leads a team of established and experienced staff and has the specific experience and qualifications to meet the needs of the children in the home.

There has been one external complaint since the last inspection. The manager responded to this and resolved it; however, no formal record was made of this incident at the time. This does not provide transparent record of concerns and outcomes.

The Statement of Purpose gives an overview of the facilities provided by the home. This enables parents, professionals and staff to understand the aims of the home. The young people's guide sets out information to ensure young people know exactly what the homes offers.

The home has undergone several changes in the management roles in the last year after an unsettled period where the combination of placements resulted in behaviours that were of high concern. The new manager is committed to raising the quality of care and keeps young people's experience of the home central to this. The changes are significant, placements are given careful consideration, there is a consistent approach from staff and team morale has improved. Staff have addressed the recommendations and requirements raised at the last inspection.

The manager has identified areas for improvement and made plans to address these.

The manager understands areas for improvement and key areas have been prioritised. Staff absence has meant the manager has had less support for managerial monitoring and as a result the internal monitoring of records is weak. In addition the review of care carried out by the manager does not include consultation or stakeholders views. External monitoring has been highlighted as poor and new arrangements are in place.

Staff are adequately trained or training for their roles. Their ongoing professional development is supported well. Specific training courses are provided in line with the needs of the young people they care for. The staff team provide a good mix of age, race and gender providing a range of different adult role models for young people. The majority of staff work well together to promote a homely environment in which young people know they are genuinely cared for. Supervision is provided and staff say that they feel fully supported in their roles. However, the records of supervision are incomplete; this makes concerns about staff performance difficult to follow through.

Young people's individual records are stored securely. These include reports and records of events and provide a clear overview of events in the home. The significant events are notified to Ofsted.

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.