

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064472
Inspector	Norma Welsby
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Willows (Devon) Limited
Registered person address	Manleys Farm West Buckland WELLINGTON Somerset TA21 9LQ
Responsible individual	Jennifer Gould
Registered manager	Jayne Marie Hammett
Date of last inspection	15/01/2014

Inspection date	10/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a small private organisation and is registered to provide care for up to four young women with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The company also runs its own school located nearby which young people attend until they start college.

The home operates a smallholding with vegetable and fruit gardens. A number of animals are kept, including horses, chickens, ducks, pigs, sheep, and various small companion animals, including house cats.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
15/01/2014	Interim	good progress
31/10/2013	Full	good
20/02/2013	Interim	good progress
25/10/2012	Full	good

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
34 (2001)	The Registered Person shall establish and maintain a system for (a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months and (b) improving the quality of care provided in the children's home (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b)).	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- Ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to ensure compliance with the homes policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. The managers comments, including any ways to improve practice further, should be included in these records (NMS 21.2)
- Ensure there is a good quality learning and development programme, which facilitates regular opportunities for staff to refresh and develop their specialist knowledge to enable them to fully understand and meet the changing needs of young people in their care (NMS 18.1)
- Ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping, in particular that staff fire training records fully evidence that all staff have had sufficient fire safety training (NMS 22.1).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people achieve good outcomes from their placement in this home. They make good progress in their education, their social skills and confidence and their behaviour. Young people benefit from knowing staff have high expectations of them. This is clear from the start of their placement. Young people always visit the service beforehand and their admission is dependent on their agreement that they wish to live there and have an understanding of what will be expected of them.

Young people present as positive and confident. They speak enthusiastically about living in the home. They feel consulted and feel their views are important to their carers. Young people enjoy and respect their environment, which provides a high standard of space and comfort. They take pride in their animals and to varying degrees are involved in their care and welfare. As a result of their positive experiences in caring for the animals, some young people are intending to pursue associated careers.

Young people are making good progress at school and their attendance is excellent. Staff are clear in their expectation that all young people attend school or college and young people are benefitting from this clarity of expectation. All young people attend the company's school until they can go to college. Carers support teaching staff to enable young people to achieve academic and vocational goals.

Young people are actively involved in a wide range of activities outside of home and school. For example some go horse riding and enjoy visiting national events. Young people are also involved in charity events such as Race for Life, in raising money for the local baby care unit and supporting a horse riding centre that caters for riders with disabilities. These experiences enable young people to develop their insight and emotional intelligence as they mature into young adults.

Young people's health needs are very well met. Young people enjoy lots of outdoor activities and look healthy in their appearance. All young people have access to a range of local health services. Minimal medication is in use and young people are encouraged to manage their own medicines where it is safe for them to do so. Healthy, home-cooked and nutritious meals are provided and young people are actively involved in preparing meals. Staff support young people in making healthy lifestyle choices, facilitating specialist support where this is beneficial. Young people and staff also have good access to a clinical psychologist, employed by the company on a consultancy basis.

Young people benefit from regularly seeing members of their family and friends from outside of the home and school. Staff support young people to sustain these important relationships. Young people confirm that staff are welcoming of visitors to

the home, including having family and friends enjoy meals with them.

Young people have a range of age-appropriate opportunities to develop their practical skills. These include domestic skills such as cooking and laundry and also caring for the wide range of animals. Young people also benefit from staff encouraging their use of public transport and personal budgeting. Young people expressed that they enjoy learning to be more independent and feel proud of their achievements.

Quality of care

good

The quality of relationships that exist between young people and staff is an outstanding feature of this home. Without exception all comments received from young people about staff are very positive. All observations confirmed young people's views that the staff treat young people with respect and are very child-focussed in their practices.

Staff at all levels have consistently high aspirations for all young people. Staff challenge barriers and advocate well on behalf of young people. They see their role as an opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of the young people in their care. Staff are consistent and yet creative in their approach, recognising the diverse needs and experiences young people have.

An effective range of strategies are in place to ensure young people are listened to and that their views are valued. Young people know this and benefit from being treated in this way. For example, young people contribute to staff appraisals and are happy to meet weekly to discuss on-going matters. This mature approach has contributed to the success of the use of restorative justice and equips young people effectively to manage difficult situations they will face in the future as they develop their independence. Young people know how to complain and have experience of their concerns being taken seriously. Staff understand the importance of young people being empowered, while also recognising their role in supporting young people to make considered choices.

Individual placement plans are good. Staff work effectively with young people's social workers to ensure young people's changing needs are reviewed and addressed. Social workers complimented how well staff keep them informed and how well they involve families.

The home provides a comfortable and attractive environment maintained to a high standard. The farmhouse kitchen accommodates a large central table where young people and staff sit together to enjoy meals and conversation. Throughout there is very much a sense of young people living there, with books, DVDs, art work and photographs of their achievements and activities. The environment is spacious, affording young people the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities outside of their bedrooms, which are highly personalised. The extensive grounds are well maintained

and mainly given over to paddocks and housing for the variety of animals. There is also a cultivated garden area, where young people have a pool and trampoline. Adjacent to this is a quiet garden where young people can relax in hammocks.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The safeguarding and protection of young people is taken very seriously by staff. For example, while young people rarely go missing from this home, when they do, staff follow them extensively to try to ensure they do not come to any harm. If young people develop risk taking behaviour, leaders and managers are prompt in collaborating with professionals to ensure robust action is taken to identify what strategies can be put in place to keep young people safe. Triggers are identified and young people are engaged in identifying solutions. These effective working practices place young people's safety and wellbeing at the heart of the home's functioning. Young people understand why staff operate in this way and benefit from knowing staff care about their welfare.

There are robust safeguarding policies in place which are known to staff. Staff receive regular refresher training in child protection and safeguarding procedures. The majority have also had recent training in child sexual exploitation and on-line protection. Staff are aware of the company's designated person for safeguarding and know how to contact the local authority designated officers and safeguarding teams. Any matters of concern are promptly referred. Leaders and managers operate in an open and transparent way as they fully appreciate this is the most effective way to protect young people.

Staff are suitably trained in the management of behaviour. They understand and work within the legislative framework. Positive strategies such as incentive schemes are used effectively. Physical interventions are used minimally and if used are low level. Police involvement in the home is minimal, but when this is necessary, young people are supported to reflect on how they can affect positive change.

There are robust systems in place to ensure safe staff recruitment procedures are followed. Staff retention is high and the home uses its own bank staff to cover shortages and not staff from external agencies. This means that all staff are trained to work safely with young people who they know from the home and across the school site.

Health and safety tests of appliances are in place along with environmental risk assessments.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She has been in post with this company since 2007. The manager provides strong leadership and direction. She leads by example and is well thought of by young people, staff and professionals alike. The manager is well supported by the Responsible Individual and has a positive working relationship with the other Registered Manager within the company.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. There is a detailed development plan in place along with monthly independent monitoring. Improvements are identified and timely action is taken. The home also has a good track record in responding to any shortfalls identified during inspection. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection in January 2014. The manager also monitors and reviews the quality of care each month. While thorough, this review does not provide a suitable balance between monitoring historical practices and identifying how the service can further improve the quality of care provided to young people in the future. Also, in relation to the manager monitoring and signing off records of serious incidents, her comments evaluating the effectiveness of staff interventions and practices are not included. This means that an opportunity is lost to evidence how care practices are developed and how staff are supported to manage difficult situations.

There are sufficient and well trained staff in post. There is good staff retention and good arrangements in place to provide young people with consistency of care. Staff say they feel very well supported. They receive monthly supervision and annual appraisals. Time is also allowed for thorough staff handovers between shifts. There is a comprehensive staff induction and on-going training programme in place. Staff fire training records do not fully evidence that all staff have had suitable fire safety training, although staff are regularly involved in fire drills with young people. At the time of the inspection 50% of staff had achieved NVQ level 3 or equivalent and remaining staff had commenced the qualification. While it is apparent that young people benefit from being cared for by well-trained staff, not all staff have had recent training in attachment theories. This means that some staff have not had the opportunity to refresh and develop their specialist knowledge to enable them to fully understand and meet the changing needs of young people in their care.

The staff team as a whole are highly motivated and committed to raising standards and achieving the best possible outcomes for young people. They provide very personalised care which takes good account of the diverse needs and interests of all young people. The home clearly demonstrates its impact and the value that living there has on young peoples lives and how their life chances have improved over time.

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.