

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Sonya Robinson
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Date of last inspection	9 February 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is a large Victorian detached property in a village. They provide accommodation for children and young people from the ages of 10 years to 17 years, with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Accommodation is provided over three floors, the ground floor includes a kitchen, two lounges and a dining room. Young people have their own rooms which are located on the upper floors.

The home is close to local shops, transport links and community resources.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is a good service overall.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. They are also afforded a range of facilities and opportunities to encourage and support a healthy lifestyle, to develop their life skills and to reach good outcomes from education. However, there are issues around staff files, door alarms and staff training.

Staff benefit from a good level of support, they work well with other professionals to meet the complex and holistic needs of young people in areas, such as, emotional and physical wellbeing.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made on the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that they help to plan at their weekly meetings, taking into account their likes and dislikes. Young people are encouraged to assist with preparing meals and shopping in preparation for adulthood.

The diet that young people enjoy and systems to promote and maintain their health, alongside a commitment by staff to help them experience a range of outdoor activities, assists young people in living a balanced, healthy lifestyle.

Each young person has a key worker who ensures their health care needs are met. This includes making necessary health appointments, arranging for advice and guidance where necessary and ensuring that health care plans are up to date and contain an accurate account of the young person's health needs.

Appropriate medical appointments are arranged for young people, with staff demonstrating that they are aware that some young people may wish to protect their privacy and attend appointments alone. Where necessary, incentives are offered to young people who need encouragement to attend their appointments.

Staff invite relevant professionals to speak to young people at the home regarding issues, such as smoking and sexual health matters.

A medication procedure is in place to ensure the safe administration of medications at the home. Information sheets are held about the medications young people need, informing staff of any possible side effects that they may cause. This ensures that the health care needs of young people are promoted and met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff create a warm and open environment where young people are treated with respect and are supported in everyday decisions about their lives. Young people are encouraged to talk through any disagreements they may have between each other and to resolve them amicably. Staff encourage young people to talk about any problems they have and work together to sort them out, whilst being aware of potential safeguarding issues and the need to involve relevant professionals. This helps to promote an open atmosphere where young people develop skills for adult life.

Staff respect young people's privacy and confidentiality in a way that is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Young people make and receive telephone calls in private and are given space and time to be alone when they wish.

Staff fully understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare, receiving training in how to safeguard young people including recognising the signs and symptoms of abuse. They provide a good level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in the home and in the community. They give young people good advice about personal safety. Staff respond appropriately to any serious concerns about young people's safety and let parents, the police and social workers know about serious events involving young people.

Bullying is not tolerated at the home. Where staff are concerned that it is happening, risk assessments are completed and updated regularly to ensure that young people are kept safe. Staff make use of opportunities such as weekly meetings with young people and key working sessions in a proactive manner; this reduces the risks associated with these behaviours and creates an open atmosphere for young people to discuss issues concerning them.

Young people are provided with information about their rights and how to deal with their concerns through the complaints procedure. They know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy, including making a complaint to the placing authority. The home keeps a written record of any complaints and the action taken to deal with them.

Staff act as positive role models and use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. They place an emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding their behaviour. Young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable.

Staff praise young people when they do well and reward them. They also reassure young people when they are upset and help them deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way. Staff do not condone unacceptable behaviour and assist young people to learn to manage their

behaviour and solve problems. This means that young people are clear about what is expected of them and how to achieve positive outcomes.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks of the environment and fire safety systems are checked at the required intervals. There are systems in place for the vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home. However, not all information, such as photographic identification, is copied from the organisation's head office and was unable to be observed during this inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff support and encourage young people to take part in leisure activities. Young people pursue particular interests, such as sports. They get opportunities to develop confidence in their skills, enjoy their leisure time and try new things. Staff are good at encouraging young people to take part in outdoor activities and enjoy new experiences.

Education is actively promoted and plays an important part in the lives of young people. Their educational needs are identified in written plans and there are arrangements for meeting their needs. Staff see education as important and create a stimulating environment that supports and encourages young people to learn and study. Young people know that they are expected to attend education and conform to this expectation; they each have access to educational materials to aid their learning. Staff demonstrate a commitment to the educational needs of young people and where necessary act as advocates ensuring that young people's opinions are listened to.

Young people enjoy learning and are making good progress. Their preferences are taken into account and they have opportunities to study and get work experience in areas that interest them. The home is good at working with schools to support young people's learning and address problems affecting their education.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff maintain detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's care is reviewed to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Young people are listened to and their views about their lives are taken into account. They are involved in their care planning and play an active role in making decisions about their future.

Staff encourage young people's families and friends to maintain contact; this helps young people see their families regularly to help them maintain relationships. They make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's welfare. They work closely with young people's families to ensure that contact is a positive experience for young people.

Young people enjoy warm relationships with staff based on honesty and respect. Staff are motivated and interested in young people. They have clear professional and personal boundaries with young people, consistent with good childcare.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff prepare young people for adult life. Young people are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves, suitable to their age and understanding. They routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of the home, such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money and household tasks. In addition, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, organisational and social skills.

Young people live in homely and comfortable accommodation. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs. The home has in use, on limited doors, an alarm system. This prevents some young people from moving freely within the house. Although a risk assessment is in place, for restricting movements within the home and individual risk assessments highlight the reasons around this. They do not state, for example, how the liberty and rights of young people are promoted, in line with their individual and specific needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people's rights are respected and are actively promoted. The service demonstrates that the individual care needs of young people are identified and that direct work with young people is undertaken. Their care needs are routinely monitored through good systems. This ensures that the individual care needs of young people are met.

The home provides a safe and stable environment for young people. It is well run. The manager shows effective leadership and a commitment to good childcare. Staff feel supported and valued.

Young people know what support they can expect from the home and how they will be looked after. The children's guide and statement of purpose have been reviewed since the last inspection, providing important information about the home in a way that is easily understood by young people. The home has a clear written statement for parents and social workers of how the home operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Young people are looked after by competent and enthusiastic people who have suitable skills and experience to meet their needs. However, not all care staff have completed a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification.

Staff provide positive adult role models for young people and work in a consistent way to provide young people with stability and emotional security. Staff are well supported by the manager and receive regular professional supervision. Staff meetings take place regularly and provide an opportunity to discuss the running of the home and reflect on young people's needs and progress.

A representative of the organisation monitors the home monthly, whilst the manager monitors systems at the home in line with Regulation 34. This shows that standards are monitored to ensure that systems are maintained to a good standard and that young people receive a consistent service.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
27	ensure all staff records contain all of the information required under the Regulations. (Reg 26, Schedule 2)	30 September 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure physical restrictions on normal movement within the home, for example bedroom door alarms are only used in relation to individual children where the restriction has been agreed within their placement plan to promote and safeguard their welfare. Physical restrictions must not impact on all children staying at the home (NMS 23.5)
- ensure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff have completed National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification (NMS 29.5).