

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064663
Inspection date	18 January 2010
Inspector	Sonya Robinson
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	9 September 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

This visit was an interim inspection and was unannounced. One outcome area for young people was fully looked at during this inspection, which was staying safe. Further issues were also looked at under economic well-being and organisation as a follow-up from the previous inspection. This inspection looked at the progress that the home has made with the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection. These related to documentation for staff and organisational issues.

The home continues to be a good service that meets most of the national minimum standards. Young people enjoy living there and feel cared for. Young people are looked after by a group of competent and skilled people. The staff place emphasis on young people's needs and supporting young people with their daily lives.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the manager was asked to ensure that all staff records contain all of the information required under the regulations. This has now been completed.

The manager and organisation were also asked, in order to raise standards and improve practice to ensure that any 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. There is now appropriate documentation in place to support this, which includes regular review of any such measures.

The service was also asked to ensure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff have completed National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification, this remains ongoing and so is raised again on this inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They have single bedrooms and their privacy and dignity are respected when washing. The accommodation provides space where young people can relax and spend time alone when they wish. Staff respect young people's privacy consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

The home has a suitable complaints procedure which is accessible to young people, their parents and other relevant people. Staff are open to responding to concerns, including those made by local neighbours.

Staff understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. The home has detailed and clear procedures and guidance for responding to concerns about young people's safety. Staff also have access to the local authority's child protection policy and guidance and all have received suitable training. Staff are knowledgeable about the procedures and put them in practice when they have concerns about young people's safety.

Bullying is not currently an issue for young people. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying, and provide supervision and encourage young people to deal with any difficulties constructively when necessary. Staff place an emphasis on encouraging young people not to go missing by providing young people with meaningful and enjoyable things to do. Young people and staff are aware of young people's rights, legislation and guidance relating to freedom of movement and follow this in practice. The home has individual risk assessments regarding young people's known or likely activities.

Staff build positive relationships with young people by explaining and showing young people what is socially acceptable behaviour. Staff see young people in a positive light and are committed to helping them when they are anxious or upset. Also, they are knowledgeable and understanding about young people's individual behaviours. The home has well-established links with helping agencies, and actively seek advice and guidance in managing specific behaviours.

Staff use effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Records relating to sanctions show that they are fair and reasonable. Records relating to physical intervention show that it is used minimally, and staff have training in this area. The home places emphasis on building positive relationships with young people and understanding young people's 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.

Young people live in a safe and secure environment. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including those of the fire safety systems, to make sure that the home is a safe place to live.

The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the home is thorough to make sure young people are protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

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. There are risk assessments in place, for restricting movements within the home and individual risk assessments highlight the reasons around this. They also 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.

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 at level 3 in caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification.

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
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Recommendations

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

- ensure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff have completed National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in the caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification. (NMS 29.5)