

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC064663
Inspector	Michelle Bacon
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Mr Jim Buchanan & Mrs Ivy Thompson
Registered person address	Eastfield Group, 6d Ryeground House 6b Ryeground Lane Formby Mersyside L37 7EQ
Responsible individual	Ivy Thompson
Registered manager	Ivy Thompson
Date of last inspection	25/03/2014

Inspection date	24/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

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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The home provides good quality care that supports young people to achieve a number of positive outcomes in their lives. Most young people have been living at the home for twelve months or more. As a result, young people have developed positive attachments and feel very safe and secure.

Young people's progress is underpinned by effective care planning, proactive working relationships with external agencies and positive relationships with family members. Placing social workers value the service and say communication is a key strength of the home. Education is highly valued and staff work with education providers to successfully promote attendance and participation. One placing social worker commented on how their young person's engagement in their education has 'improved vastly.'

The manager and staff actively promote the welfare and safety of young people. Staff encourage young people to take appropriate risks as part of normal growing up. Furthermore, they have a good understanding of young people's individual needs and how these will be met. Young people benefit from a stable and consistent staff team who have high aspirations for them. The team work together to provide young people with a good standard of care that enables them to thrive and grow.

The management team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They provide training and supervision to staff so they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively care for young people. Regular monitoring of the service by an independent visitor on behalf of the provider and monitoring by managers enables the service to continue to develop and improve.

The home demonstrates a capacity for continued improvement and can evidence the difference they have made to improving young people's lives. However, this inspection has identified areas for further development. These relate to young people's records, staff training records, sanctions and appraisals.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five children or young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
25/03/2014	Interim	good progress
20/11/2013	Full	good
08/03/2013	Interim	good progress
06/12/2012	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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose; this particularly relates to the recording of any sanctions imposed (Regulation 17B (3))	27/10/2014
33 (2001)	ensure the registered provider supplies a copy of the monitoring report to Ofsted in particular these are received by the end of the month following the monitoring visit. (Regulation 33 (5) (a))	27/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure children's views, wishes and feelings are acted upon, in the day to day running of the home and important decisions or changes in the child's life, unless this is contrary to their interests(NMS1.1)
- ensure that written records are kept when a child goes missing detailing action taken by staff and the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home, and any action taken in light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the young people and purpose of the setting, in particular all mandatory training is up to date and records demonstrate that staff have completed epi-pen training(NMS 18.1)
- ensure all staff have their performance individually and formally appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for.(NMS 19.6)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action where needed. This is specifically in relation to health care plans, records of direct/key work sessions and sanction records.(NMS 22.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make and sustain appropriate attachments to staff, family and friends. They have a good understanding of their backgrounds and are more emotionally resilient. Consequently, young people are able to make sense of their past behaviours and make more positive choices. For some young people this has meant a planned rehabilitation back home. For others, they have gained confidence to make appropriate friendships within the local community.

Young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are promoted. Most young people enjoy good health and have access to a range of services to support their health needs. These include sexual health and child and adolescent mental health services. Furthermore, young people receive support and guidance to help them stop smoking. For others, they are encouraged to take more responsibility for their health needs by self-administering certain medicines in accordance with their care plans. This helps to increase young people's independence and gain confidence in themselves.

Overall, the educational attendance of young people is good, given their starting points. Most young people enjoy school and recognise the importance of education in helping them to succeed in the future. One placing social worker commented on the positive progress their young person has made since their placement began. Some young people benefit from also attending college a number of days a week, where they can learn practical skills in preparation for work. In addition one young person benefitted recently from attending a work experience placement, where they were able to gain an insight into the world of work. This increases young people's self-esteem and improves their chances of economic well-being.

Young people are developing life skills appropriate to their age and abilities. They menu plan, shop for personal items, and enjoy baking with staff. They also take responsibility for keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy. Young people are encouraged to take part in a range of activities in the community, including going to the gym, swimming, youth club and playing golf. In addition, young people and the staff enjoy group activities, such as trips to a theme park, Lazer Quest and cinema; these experiences further strengthen the positive relationships between young people and staff.

Young people are very well supported to maintain contact with their families. Placing social workers commented that a key strength of the home is the work undertaken with young people and their families to build stronger relationships. This reinforces young people's sense of identity and heritage.

Quality of care**good**

Young people thrive in an environment where they feel valued and respected as individuals. Young people confirm they have developed positive relationships with most staff and feel supported. One social worker commented 'a strength of the home is it feels homely and has a family feel which X likes.' Staff have a good understanding of the young people they work with, and are fully committed to ensuring they achieve positive outcomes.

Staff set clear and consistent boundaries which helps young people to feel safe and secure. They also work with young people to help them improve their social skills and understand the impact of their negative behaviours. Staff provide young people with plenty of opportunity for one-to-one discussions to guide and support them. Furthermore, regular house meetings take place so young people can discuss their menu choices and activities. However, the records of one-to-one discussions and house meetings do not always capture the views and opinions of young people effectively.

Placing social workers confirm young people are being cared for in line with their placement plans. Staff regularly monitor and review young people's progress to ensure they continue to meet young people's needs. Furthermore, they work very closely with placing authorities, families and other professionals so that young people receive the right support they need to achieve the objectives of their placement.

Young people live in a healthy environment that promotes their physical health and emotional well-being. Staff understand the importance of a well-balanced diet and encourage young people maintain a healthy diet. Staff are proactive in supporting young people to attend regular health checks. Where young people decline to attend health appointments, staff ensure that alternative appointments are made and discuss the importance of maintaining good health. However, health care plans are not up-to-date, as records of immunisations and some health appointments have not been recorded on contact sheets instead of the plans. This is an administration error and does not impact on young people's welfare.

The home's routines ensure young people's full participation in education. Staff maintain good links with education providers and challenge barriers to young people's participation in education. The manager and staff attend parents evenings so that they are up-to-date with young people's progress.

Young people live in a spacious and comfortable home in a residential area. The home is very well maintained, furnished and decorated.

Keeping children and young people safe**good**

Most young people say they feel safe in the home. Some young people said there is bickering between young people, and on occasions bullying has occurred. Young people confirm staff act promptly to address this when it happens. Young people say that they are able to talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns. Staff receive training in safeguarding which means if they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being they are able to take action. One young person has recently researched and prepared a collage on the effects of domestic violence. Their social worker commented that this has raised the young person's awareness about relationships.

Young people are engaged well in the home and their risk-taking behaviour has significantly reduced from their point of placement. However, there have been some episodes of young people going missing from the home. Young people are followed, searched for and protected in line with agreed protocols. This was confirmed by Police and social workers. Staff do their utmost to assess the welfare of young people who fail to return. They remain in contact, sending text messages and using 'wats app', to enable young people to return safe and well. Return interviews are undertaken with some young people by their placing social worker and staff. However, their views and comments are not consistently recorded in the missing care records. This is a recording issue and does not impact upon the welfare and safety of young people.

Young people are encouraged to develop and maintain appropriate levels of behaviour. There is good practice in relation to physical intervention as this has not been used in the home since 2011. Individual behaviour management plans and risk assessments provide staff with strategies for managing young people's behaviour. When negative behaviour occurs staff impose sanctions. However, the sanction records do not include sufficient evaluation by the Registered Manager as to the effectiveness of the measures imposed.

The home takes appropriate action to ensure the environment is safe. Risk assessments and annual safety checks mean promote the welfare and safety of young people. In addition, all new employees are vetted prior to their employment.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has been registered since 2007, and is suitably qualified to level 4 in health and social care. She brings to the role over 30 years of childcare experience and is committed to her own personal development. She has very recently registered to undertake the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management and expects to complete this within the required timeframes. There is also a qualified and experienced deputy manager who supports the manager to deliver a service that improves outcomes for young people.

A requirement to supply copies of the Regulation 34 reports to HMCI has been

addressed. HMCI is now receiving quarterly summaries, which means HMCI can monitor the home between inspections.

A recommendation to ensure the home has up-to-date information about young people's educational progress has been met. The home has been proactive in ensuring young people's individual education plans are up-to-date. Additionally, the home works effectively with educational providers to challenge any barriers to learning.

The home has a clear and comprehensive Statement of Purpose that contains all the information required to inform parents, young people and social workers about the service. The aims and objectives are clearly specified.

Good communication between the home and external agencies is a particular strength of the home. Comments from social workers include, 'communication is excellent...they are very responsive...I would be confident in using this service again', and 'they keep me informed and respond to incidents.' There have been no complaints about the home since the last inspection.

Staffing levels ensure that young people's needs are met and ensure their safety. Daily handovers and regular team meetings ensure that staff are up-to-date in relation to young people's presenting needs. This ensures young people are provided with consistency in their care by a stable staff team. There is a good balance of experience within the staff team; most staff hold a level three childcare qualification or are working towards this qualification. Although staff have access to regular training to update their skills and knowledge; training records do not demonstrate that staff have had their medication training updated or that they have had training in how to use an epi-pen. This does not impact on young people, however the records do not clearly demonstrate that staff have the appropriate skills to care for young people effectively. Records show that staff receive supervision, and that they have their performance annually appraised. However the appraisals do not take into account the views of the young people in helping to improve practise.

The home is monitored by an independent person on behalf of the provider. However, HMCI have not been sent copies of the reports since January 2014. This limits the oversight the regulator has had between inspections.

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.