

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC066458
Inspection date	14/08/2012
Inspector	Fiona Parker
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	20/01/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The registered provider is a limited company which operates a number of other children's homes. This setting is registered to provide care and accommodation for three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental disorders excluding learning difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **adequate**.

Overall, young people make adequate progress and make some improvements in their school attendance. Young people improve some of their self-care skills which supports their ability to be independent in the future. However, young people do not engage consistently therefore this limits the level of their progress and ability to sustain any achievements consistently.

Young people benefit from positive relationships with the staff team and report they get on well with the manager and staff. Young people feel they are looked after and generally feel safe. The manager and the staff team diligently follow safeguarding procedures and protocols. They understand and act upon their responsibilities to keep young people safe. The manager overviews the day-to-day quality of care and strives to improve practice and outcomes for young people through implementing a satisfactory development plan.

Young people's needs are well assessed and detailed within good individual plans. Staff know young people well and tailor their approaches to maximise the opportunities for each young person.

Overall the home is providing adequate care with some good aspects. There is one requirement, which is not fully met from the previous inspection, to report all significant events. Four recommendations have been made to improve this provision. These areas do not significantly impact upon young people's welfare.

Areas for improvement

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
30 (2001)	ensure that if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall, without delay, notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. In particular notify Ofsted. (Regulation 30 (1))	31/08/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure staff have up-to-date information about each child's educational progress. In particular personal education plans are available (NMS 8.7)
- ensure staff are equipped to meet the needs of all children. In particular consider training in attachment patterns (NMS 18.1)
- ensure the home has a record of recruitment and vetting checks. In particular copies of identity checks on files are clear and legible (NMS 16.3 a)
- ensure the children's home only provides admission to children whose assessed needs they can reasonable expect to meet. (NMS 11.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **adequate**.

Young people make some good progress in managing their emotions and responding more appropriately to boundaries. This helps young people benefit from emotional stability and present more maturely over the period of their stay.

Young people enjoy some success at engaging with education after lengthy periods of absences from education, however such progress is not consistently sustained. This impacts upon young people's potential attainment and limits their peer friendships.

Young people develop positive interests and hobbies, for example fishing. This increases their skills, such as, patience and promotes them spending time outdoors

in the community. Young people develop skills in cooking and enjoy competently cooking varied meals for staff to enjoy. This promotes their self-care skills.

Young people maintain significant relationships with their family and therefore benefit from fully understanding their family history. This promotes their family relationships now and for their long-term future. Due to close working relationships, young people understand their family and staff work together.

Young people are generally healthy and attend routine health checks. However young people sometimes repeatedly refuse specialised health support or appointments which would benefit their individual health and well-being.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **adequate**.

Young people are cared for by a committed and caring staff team. Young people are supported to make positive relationships with each other and to resolve conflicts appropriately. They make steps to modify negative behaviours through staff employing structured rewards and consequences tailored to their individual needs. As a result young people make some progress, which parents can clearly identify, 'They get him to calm down.'

Young people understand and contribute to their plans, although sometimes do not wish to. Young people can confidently express their views, including making complaints, making choices and negotiating their needs. This supports young people's relationships with the staff team.

Where young people require specialist assessment and care, the staff team support alternative plans, for example the move to health placements. Young people feel supported in their moves and maintain contact with the manager and staff team in their new placements. As a result, young people understand their plans and feel cared for and important.

The manager and staff team work very well with parents and very closely with other professionals to improve outcomes. In particular, the manager and staff team work creatively with education professionals to maintain school attendance. For example, accompanying young people and working closely with schools throughout the day. However, the most recent formal education information, such as personal education plans, are not available to ensure young people's personal goals are fully promoted. Where the manager is concerned about local authority planning or delays, appropriate action is taken, for example, discussing the concerns with the young person's independent reviewing officer or requesting meetings. One parent comments the manager, 'Fights his corner like I do.'

The staff team source and promote interests to broaden young people's opportunities and social relationships. Although young people do not always want to try new experiences, the staff team try to encourage such opportunities. The home is

pleasant and well maintained. Repairs and re-decoration have addressed some previous damage.

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **adequate** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are generally kept safe and do not engage in risk taking behaviours in the community. Young people are not missing or absent from the home. On occasions where staff are concerned about young people's whereabouts, they take immediate action to locate young people, follow local protocols with the police and safeguarding teams and duly express their views on assessing any presenting risks. This promotes young people's welfare and safety and shows genuine concern for each individual young person.

Where young people's needs change or are found not to be fully compatible, alternative plans are implemented to avoid negative experiences continuing for young people. Prompt action is taken to address any bullying and young people feel confident to express any concerns. Young people generally respond to incentives and rewards.

The need for physical interventions is not excessive and only used where there is appropriate concern for safety. Staff know young people well and understand how young people present. This enables them to recognise changes and encourage young people to discuss any concerns. One parent comments their child 'Is as happy as he can be.'

Staff are appropriately recruited, including checks on suitability. Although files contain photographic identification, these are copies and do not always clearly identify the staff members. The home is physically safe and regular checks ensure safety is maintained.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **adequate**.

The registered manager is appropriately qualified and effectively manages the home. Action has been taken to address previous requirements and recommendations, although on occasion not all notifications have been forwarded to Ofsted as required. This impacts upon young people's needs being fully considered by all agencies and prevents Ofsted gaining a full picture of events in the home.

The recently updated Statement of Purpose is clear and informative and the home operates in accordance with this. Young people are central to this provision and the staff team are committed and tolerant to the diverse needs young people present.

Staffing levels are sufficient with well-balanced shifts that meet the needs of young people. Staff report frequent supervision, team meetings and the availability of the

manager supports their work. Staff are experienced, qualified and equipped through regular training. However the programme does not include training in attachments to improve the knowledge of the staff team in line with the needs of all young people. Resources are sufficient and where additional funds are required, these are available.

Records and files are detailed, organised and well recorded. The quality of care is well monitored and prompt action is taken, and expected, to meet any shortfalls. A satisfactory development plan charts progress for the home and subject to review to achieve intended goals. The manager pro-actively obtains feedback from those who receive a service to improve the quality of care further. Good relationships with parents and professionals underpin young people's care plans and ensure their needs are regularly monitored through multi-agency arrangements. One parent reports, 'We are all working as best we can' and, 'The communication is good.'

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 *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.