

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Robert Curr
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	20 November 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

This setting provides up to three long-term placements for young people aged from 11 to 17 years old. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms. There are spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing.

The home is in a residential area, approximately five miles from the town centre and is close to public transport. One of the main aims of the setting is to provide a warm, safe, stable and nurturing environment.

Summary

This was an unannounced inspection to assess the organisation's capacity to meet the outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation. All of the key standards were checked, and improvements made since the last inspection were noted.

This is a good service. Individual leisure needs are met and a multidisciplinary approach ensures young people's views are taken into account when planning their future.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good and the staff demonstrate a full appreciation that individual young people may have a range of needs arising from diversity. Young people's welfare is clearly enhanced by the positive relationships and role models fostered by the staff team.

Young people are well cared for by staff who are competent and supported through effective management practices. Safeguarding measures are in place which not only protect young people but also promote their health, development and well-being.

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 registered person was asked to take action in relation to an aspect of staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic well-being and organisation. This included record keeping, fire safety, and staff training.

Staff use various techniques to manage challenging behaviour. These incidents are recorded in a bound and numbered book. All staff have undertaken fire drill practices and fire safety training.

Although good progress has been made overall in relation to staff training, National Vocational Qualification ratios do not meet current standards.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The food provided for young people shows that the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have a very good understanding of what makes up a balanced diet. Young people have a variety of dishes to choose from and alternatives are also provided for those

young people who are unable to eat the planned menus. In addition, fresh fruit is always available. There is clear evidence that young people choose the food they eat.

Young people's individual health and intimate care needs are identified and assessed as part of the admission process. This is recorded in a clear, easily accessible plan for each young person detailing how specific and general health issues are to be addressed while they are in the home.

There is a range of policies and procedures that offer guidance for staff working with the young people. This ensures that young people receive good care that actively promotes their well-being and health.

Policies and procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. All staff take full responsibility for ensuring safe practice. Young people's health and welfare are safeguarded because staff are made aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. However, not all staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication. Young people's well-being is further promoted as all staff are trained in basic first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show a high regard for the privacy of the young people. There are also clear policies in relation to maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Young people's welfare is further promoted because there is a well-written policy about how to make a complaint. All young people spoken with know how to make a complaint. There is an effective system in place to action any concerns made known by anyone instigating a complaint.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded because the home has a range of safeguarding policies and procedures. These policies are well established and understood by staff, although not all staff have had their training regularly updated.

Young people are protected from bullying as there are clear procedures in place to deal with incidents effectively, which staff are knowledgeable about. The behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, promoted the creation of a safe, supportive environment. There have been no incidents of bullying in the home.

Young people's well-being is positively promoted. Risk assessments are regularly updated for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments are taken into account in the daily activities of the home as well as any activities off site. Staff are highly committed to supervising young people's activities. This further ensures the overall health and safety of the young people.

The Registered Manager ensures that all staff employed undergo rigorous checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a high degree of support. The staff promote and encourage all of them to make the best of their stay in this setting. Staff were observed aiding young people to

explore their potential and develop their personal interests. They work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and activities are very good.

Young people receive individualised assistance, with the appropriate assessments and plans in place. Considerable effort is put into combining social, educational, and health needs into a package which promotes development. Young people benefit from staying in the home because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements.

Young people's social skills are well promoted as they are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities, for example, visiting restaurants, libraries and local parks. Young people said that staff share their own interests with them and encourage them to try out new activities and interests. Young people's comments and conversation clearly show that they enjoy these activities and the time they spend in the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Consulting with young people, listening to them, discussing decisions affecting their welfare with them, talking to them about their residential stay and helping young people make decisions on matters that affect them are all fully integrated into the care practices of the home. Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the young people. The organisation has a participation and involvement advisor. Young people and staff state that they have been invited to contribute to the development of this initiative.

There is an evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and the young people. The home benefits from staff that have worked there for a number of years. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining quality relationships between themselves and the young people.

Parents or carers are encouraged to visit should they choose to do so and young people are able to telephone home as and when they wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff encourage young people to develop the skills they will need in adulthood. For example, young people are given incentives to complete tasks and achieve targets. They are encouraged to learn basic life skills, such as keeping their own rooms clean and tidy, planning menus and budgeting. However, there are no formal leaving care plans in place. This does not make clear what the responsibilities of the home are.

The service provides young people with a well-maintained, homely environment. There is sufficient communal and private space, to allow young people to spend time together, if they wish, or to be alone if they prefer. The home is pleasantly furnished and decorated to a good standard and the manager makes sure that any repairs are attended to promptly. This in turn encourages young people to respect the property and enables them to have pride in their home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose describing the services offered. The children's guide is child-friendly and appropriate for the young people who use the service.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff have a clear understanding of identity and how this impacts on the people in their care. Issues relating to equality and diversity are addressed through the care planning process.

There is always sufficient staff on duty to ensure that young people are properly supported at all times. Staff confirm that they are very well supported by the management team.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded by a competent, highly motivated staff team with a range of experience. These skills are well matched to the young people who use the service. The manager is currently undertaking a management qualification but is not registered with Ofsted. Not all staff have achieved a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Currently, the overall qualification recommendation is not met but is on target for completion this year.

Arrangements for the external monitoring of the home are in place. The visits are carried out regularly by a visiting director within the organisation. The quality of these reports give a clear picture of the quality of care offered in the home. The overall monitoring processes include consultation with young people and staff.

Appropriate policies are in place and available to the staff. However, a number of policies are under review. It is not clear which policies are currently pertinent to the work staff are undertaking. This was discussed at length with the manager.

The young people's files contain a range of documents, which the staff require in order to look after the young people. They are in very good order and securely stored. The young people have access to the files if they wish and have done so.

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 Children's 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):

- obtain a formal pathway plan, ensuring it relates to the needs of the individual and is signed by all relevant parties (NMS 6.2)
- endeavour to review all relevant operational policies and ensure that they are up to date and consistent with the aims of the home and the organisation (NMS 28.8)
- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification (NMS 29.5)

- ensure that the training programme is maintained, in particular with regard to child protection, behaviour management training and safe handling of medication. (NMS 31.5)