

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	24 August 2009
Inspector	Alex Turner
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	15 January 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 children's home occupies a large farmhouse style property with extensive outdoor space surrounded by fields and countryside. It has four bedrooms for residents and an office/sleep-in room, located over two floors. Each young person has their own room.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. Care and support is planned and kept under review. Young people are supported to adopt a healthy lifestyle and behave responsibly. They are encouraged to use, participate in and contribute to their social communities. The home provides a safe environment. Young people have good opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities and pastimes. Education is promoted as is the development of practical life skills and social competence. Staff are trained and competent. Management is good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The Registered Manager was asked to ensure consultation with young people becomes part of the process to monitor and improve standards in the home. The Registered Manager was also asked to supply to Ofsted a report in respect of any review conducted by them for the purposes of monitoring and improving the quality of care. Appropriate action has been taken to address both of these issues. In doing so, a sharper focus on practice has been achieved which is helping to improve placement outcomes.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment. The home does well to ensure information about the background, history and status of each young person's health is obtained at the earliest opportunity. This informs the initial health care assessment and planning. Young people benefit from professional assessment of their psychological and emotional health, the outcome and findings of which inform and contribute to behaviour strategies, education plans, and day to day contact and support. Young people are able to attend appointments and clinics. Staff understand and are able to work positively with young people that are reluctant and anxious to attend health care appointments. Access to general and specialist health care services is routinely arranged. The home has well established links with health care providers. Concerns or observations about a young person's health are followed up and where necessary repeatedly so. Medication is stored safely and managed according to appropriate procedures.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from support and facilities that serve to protect and promote their welfare and safety. Concerns or complaints are taken seriously and carefully investigated. Persons making a complaint are kept informed of the process and outcome of any investigation that

takes place. An appropriate response is made to allegations or suspicion of abuse. Staff have a good understanding of their duties in relation to protecting young people from harm and what they need to do to fulfil these. There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and there is monitoring of visitors to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. The recruitment process is tightly managed by knowledgeable and competent staff that take great care to ensure all checks are carefully processed and followed up appropriately. There are positive relationships between young people in the home. The risk of bullying is managed and reduced; there are clear prevention strategies known and understood by staff. The welfare and safety of young people who go missing is protected. Appropriate action is taken to ensure young people are safe and receive suitable support on their return to the home including the chance to discuss with someone independent of the home the reasons why they went missing. Young people live in a home that provides a safe and secure environment. Action is taken to help ensure hazards and risks are managed safely. Safe working practices are established. The building and facilities are maintained to a suitable standard. Fire safety systems are routinely checked and serviced.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour. They are given support and encouragement to reflect on and learn from the consequences of their actions. Positive behaviour is acknowledged and rewarded with trust and opportunities requiring such. Measures of discipline and control are appropriate and are used responsibly. Young people on occasion assault and abuse staff. Such incidents are followed up; support is provided to those involved. Managerial monitoring, supervision and external quality assurance checks help ensure young people are protected from inappropriate sanctions and restraints.

Young people are satisfied their privacy is respected and that confidential information about them is treated as such. Young people's rooms are respected as their own personal space and provision is made for keeping valuables and cherished possessions safe. Staff are careful to ensure sensitive information about young people is only discussed in private and is not shared inappropriately. The confidentiality of written records is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive individual support when they need it. Staff work to establish and maintain effective relationships with young people and seek to engage with them in positive ways. The service is aware of and works with other professionals and agencies relevant to each young person's needs and circumstances. Alongside informal guidance and assistance provided by the daily contact with staff young people receive regular and frequent 1-1 time to cover any aspect of their support and development needs. Each young person has a named key worker though they may also approach any member of staff about anything they wish to share. Young people's history and background is valued. Services provided take these into account for instance in meals and activities, health care and contact arrangements. Young people's interests are encouraged and developed.

Education is actively promoted in itself and as part of the preparation for adulthood. Each of the young people in the home has a personal education plan. These are discussed with young people and they have an influence on decisions made. Communication between the home and education providers is frequent and regular. The handover of information is managed well.

Young people's transport to and from school is suitably managed. Regular and punctual attendance is encouraged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from a well managed referral, assessment and admission process. The home seeks to work in partnership with young people's social workers and to consult with and involve young people in the process. Planned placements have been well managed and provide examples of good practice such as pre placement visits and careful consideration of the likely effects of admission upon the existing group of residents.

Placement plans clearly inform practice and the focus of individual support. The plans cover a range of different areas including health, education, activities, contact, cultural, religious, language and racial needs. Placement objectives and the contribution to be made by staff towards meeting these are clearly specified and known by the care team. Progress towards meeting placement objectives is reviewed with young people and shared with the appropriate agencies at regular intervals. The home contributes to and encourages the participation of young people in their formal care and education reviews and to be involved in decisions made about them. Young people have the opportunity to have a say about and influence day to day matters in the home. Activities and menus, use of buildings and space, décor and facilities are all areas in which young people have a voice.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact with their families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. The services contributes a good deal to ensure young people have the support they need to have appropriate contact. Where it is necessary to do so, arrangements include transport, venue, escorts, supervision and a contact report. Staff are clear about their role in promoting safe contact and the involvement of parents, relatives and friends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people receive care which helps to prepare them for and support them into adulthood. The daily life of the home provides opportunities for all young people in the home, appropriate to their age and needs, for the development of knowledge and skills needed by them for future independent living. Young people have the benefit of a structured programme of skills assessment and training. The extent to which young people actively engage with the programme varies though it serves well as a framework for practice. Staff are creative in their use of day to day opportunities in, around, and away from the home to promote the learning of practical life skills.

Young people enjoy homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard, providing adequate facilities for their use. The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. Gardens and hard play areas are well maintained and safe. Each young person has their own bedroom which they may personalise. Bedrooms are suitably equipped and furnished. There are some good facilities for young people to pursue personal hobbies at the home, with sufficient and secure storage for safekeeping of materials.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a clear statement of how the home operates. This is available for parents, social workers and others needing this information. Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home and how they will be cared for. Young peoples needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality. Each young person has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress.

Young people are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in carrying out their work. Staff and the registered person of the home are properly managed, supported and understand to whom they are accountable. Staff meetings occur at least monthly and include discussion of both the home's work in caring for individual young people and the management of the resident group, together with review of the home's practices. Meetings have an agenda and are minuted.

Young people receive the care and services they need from trained and competent staff. Staff are sufficient in number, experience and qualification to meet the needs of the children. Staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff at particular times are suitably experienced. Young people benefit from continuity in staffing and staff of both genders. There is always at least one member of staff responsible for each identifiable group of young people within or outside the home and young people know who that member of staff is, and how to contact them.

Ongoing monitoring of the quality of care by the manager and the registered provider help to ensure shortfalls in practice are quickly identified. A cycle of review, analysis, planning and action is becoming established. Action is taken if necessary in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues or events to improve the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and the quality of care in the home.

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

There are no recommendations.