

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC069176
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Inspector	Sue Winson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	7 January 2009
--------------------------------	----------------

© Crown copyright 2009

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.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 home is a semi detached house in its own grounds situated on a quiet residential road with access to local shops, schools, public transport and leisure facilities. The service provides care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection took place on one day. The outcomes for young people are good and there is effective care planning which ensures consistency of care and a focus on meeting individual needs. Healthy living is promoted as is educational attendance and achievement. Young people are involved in decision making and are consulted. Their family and friends are welcomed in the home. The manager and staff are committed to improving outcomes for young people and work enthusiastically and flexibly to meet their needs.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home has acted on the two recommendations made at the last inspection. All staff have now completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in the care of children and young people. The manager is undertaking a management qualification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive healthy and nutritious meals and their individual diets are monitored. They have the opportunity to budget for meals, shop and prepare meals and enjoy cooking with staff. Young people know what constitutes a healthy and balanced diet. Menus reflect young people's cultural and religious choices. There is sufficient dining space and meals are routinely taken at the table and are social occasions.

Comprehensive health plans outline young people's physical and emotional needs and how they will be met. These are updated at least monthly. The manager ensures that full written information is received from placing authorities to inform these plans. On occasion, she has gained the information verbally when young people have been admitted in an emergency. All are registered with a local doctor, optician and dental practice and have regular check ups. Young people receive specialist health services to meet their assessed needs where appropriate and the home contracts in a clinical psychologist who provides advice and training for staff. Policies are in place which include health promotion and young people are encouraged to take regular exercise. Records of accidents are kept which demonstrate that appropriate action has been taken.

Young people are safeguarded by the home's policies and practices for the administration of medication. Staff are appropriately trained and medication is securely stored. Permission for medical treatment has been obtained. The home does not presently keep a stock of non-prescription medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and confidential information is safely stored. Young people say that staff knock on bedroom doors and await permission to enter and do not talk about private matters in front of other young people. The home can demonstrate an appropriate balance between young people's need for time alone and welfare considerations. Young people are satisfied with the arrangements for them to make telephone calls in private.

The welfare of young people is promoted and safeguarded. Policies on safeguarding, complaints, missing from home and bullying inform staff practice. Young people know how to complain and are provided with telephone numbers they can use to contact people outside of the home. There have been no complaints, child protection matters or incidents of missing from home since the last inspection. The manager is aware of the new police protocols on missing from home which are due to be put in place in the near future. Young people express confidence that bullying would be resolved by staff and outline an example of where an incident outside of the home had been immediately addressed. Personal safety considerations are included in care plans and staff talk to young people about keeping safe. Staff receive training and regular updates in safeguarding children.

Staff are trained in positive behaviour management and strategies are based on establishing and maintaining professional relationships with the young people. Encouragement and praise are used more often than sanctions, which are few and reasonable. Young people know the rules and what is expected of them. Reward systems are in place and young people are involved in identifying a small number of reasonable and achievable goals and choose their own rewards. The staff work together and communicate well to provide a consistent approach in line with young people's behaviour plans. There has been no use of physical intervention since the home opened.

The home provides physical safety and security and regular fire checks and drills are carried out, as are gas and electrical checks. Detailed personal risk assessments safeguard the young people and these are updated either monthly or if there are any changes. These include risk management plans to reduce or minimise risk and staff find them useful.

There have been no new staff employed in the home since the last inspection when systems for staff selection were found to protect young people. The manager has a system in place for monitoring when Criminal Record Bureau checks need to be renewed after three years, in line with the home's policy. A visitors book is in use.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Individual support is provided in line with young people's needs, which are outlined in their placement plans. Individual work with young people is planned and recorded. Staff also take opportunities as they arise to talk with young people about personal issues and respond to their requests. Young people are positive about the support they receive and feel listened to. They say they can talk to any member of staff. Young people have someone outside of the home who they can contact.

Education is promoted in line with the home's policies and young people are supported to attend and achieve at school. Staff attend education meetings and events. Personal Education Plans in schools information is held on files. Where appropriate learning support staff assist young people and there is good communication between the home and schools. Where young people are admitted from outside of the area in an emergency, the manager advocates on their behalf and works with the placing authority to identify and obtain a suitable education place as soon as possible. However, despite her efforts there have been delays in one instance. In the meantime staff engage young people in educational activities including trips to museums and researching the local area, which also helps young people become familiar with their environment.

Young people are encouraged and supported to engage in age-appropriate activities and outings. They express satisfaction with the range of activities provided and are able to pursue their interest and join community organisations. Their friends visit the home and go on trips with them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Comprehensive written placement plans are compiled which outline young people's needs and how they will be met. These include cultural, racial and religious needs and the home has been active in finding local resources to meet these needs. Young people's views are sought and recorded. These are consistent with care plans and the home ensures that full information is received from placing authorities to inform these plans. Young people, their families and social workers sign the plans and they are monitored by a key worker and updated monthly. Regular reports outlining their progress are also compiled. Staff attend planning meetings and statutory reviews. Young people are appropriately placed in the home and are supported to move into the home or leave in a sensitive manner. The manager considers the needs of the resident group as well as the home's ability to meet the needs of any child referred before making a decision about the appropriateness of placements.

Young people are supported to maintain constructive contact with their families and others who play a significant role in their lives. Young people say that their families are made welcome and staff arrange transport where necessary. Staff recognise young people's rights to contact and make appropriate arrangements for them to make telephone calls between visits.

Staff encourage young people to sign records in the home and add their comments. Young people are routinely asked for their views as part of daily life and are involved in decision making wherever possible. They have a voice and are able to express their views freely. Their families are involved in key decisions and are kept informed. Religious, racial and cultural backgrounds of children and their families are taken into account. Young people's meetings happen regularly and include planning of meals, activities and outings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are receiving care which helps prepare them for adulthood. None of the young children are of an age where formal pathway planning is in place. They are encouraged and supported to develop life skills dependent on their age and level of ability. There is an appropriate balance between the need of independence and welfare considerations. Young

people are involved in budgeting and shopping and choose their own clothes. They express satisfaction with the amount of pocket money and clothing allowance they receive.

The home is well furnished and decorated in a homely style. Repairs and refurbishments are carried out in a timely manner. The young people have their own bedrooms and personalise them. Plans are in place for their rooms to be decorated according to their choice of colours. These rooms are large enough for young people to see visitors or practise their religion in private.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Placement plans reflect the holistic support young people need. Respecting difference is promoted and inappropriate or negative comments are challenged. Young people are guided by staff to access resources in the community to meet their needs.

The home has a statement of purpose which outlines the services provided. The young persons guide meets regulations and is in appropriate language for the young people resident. The manager is in the process of producing a more pictorial version in DVD format.

There are sufficient staff in the home with a range of skills and experience. The staff group is stable and it is evident that they work cooperatively with a focus on the needs of young people. There is a balance of staff of various ages and both genders. Only bank staff employed by the home and known to the young people are used to cover shifts. The home maintains its staffing policy and staff are well supported and regularly supervised. Arrangements are in place for the manager's professional supervision. Team meetings take place regularly and provide opportunities to discuss the young people and to examine their practice with a focus on improvement. Training is provided to meet the needs of the staff, who value the opportunities to enhance their skills. All have completed NVQs in the care of children and young people.

The manager monitors the home through direct observation, supervision of staff and auditing of records and files. She provides positive leadership and staff are positive about her management skills and style, describing her as approachable and available to them. She is in the process of completing a management qualification. Visits under Regulation 33 take place monthly and the comprehensive written report, which includes action planning, combines the findings of this visit with the manager's formal monthly monitoring. As a result, the home cannot easily demonstrate that the monitoring systems meet the National Minimum Standards. A development plan is in place.

The home is well organised and efficiently run. Young people's files and records are well ordered and information is easy to access. Clear and factual recording reflects their progress.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the manager has a professional qualification relevant to working with children (NMS 34)
- ensure that the recording of monitoring visits demonstrate that all the relevant checks have been carried out (NMS 32).