

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Anthony Kyem
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	15 February 2010
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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 home provides care and accommodation for one young person of either sex aged between 11 and 17 years. The home is a detached property situated in a private residential area. There is a local bus service providing access to the town centre.

The accommodation provided for young people includes a lounge, kitchen, dining area and three separate bedrooms, one of which is also used as an office. The young person has their own bedroom with private en-suite facilities. There is a bathroom on the first floor and a separate toilet on the ground floor. To the rear of the property is an enclosed garden with patio area.

Summary

The inspection of the home was unannounced, all key national minimum standards were inspected. The visit was used to assess the home's capacity to meet the outcome areas for young people in relation to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation.

The home provides care for young people to good standards. Young people's needs are effectively assessed by staff and care is provided in accordance with young people's placement plans, which are well written. These are used by staff to provide young people with good levels of support. The objectives of young people's plans are routinely reviewed and monitored, to ensure they reflect young people's changing needs and circumstances.

The health, welfare and safety of young people is promoted. They are registered with local health services and they receive good advice and support on relevant health issues. They are encouraged by staff to eat healthily and they receive a well balanced diet, in accordance with their individual dietary requirements.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There are no actions or recommendations resulting from the home's previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The foods provided for young people are varied, nutritionally balanced and wholesome. Meals are prepared in accordance with young people's individual dietary requirements. Healthy eating is promoted and staff take into consideration young people's likes and dislikes in relation to foods. Young people enjoy the variety of foods provided for them and confirm they are routinely consulted about their meals.

The procedures for handling, recording, administering and storing young people's medication are managed safely. Action is taken to secure medical treatment for young people, where required. Young people are registered with local health services and they are encouraged by staff to attend their routine health appointments at appropriate intervals. Specialist support,

for example, therapeutic support, is accessible to young people, if required, to promote healthy outcomes for them.

Staff provide young people with good advice and support on relevant health related issues. This includes providing them with information, advice and literature for them to read. Young people are therefore encouraged to develop their knowledge and awareness of relevant, health related issues. Staff receive training which enables them to administer first aid safely, and parental consent is obtained for the administration of first aid and non-prescription medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. There are good arrangements in place for young people to wash in private. Young people have their own bedrooms, with private en-suite washing facilities for their use. Their private information is securely stored and confidentiality is effectively promoted. Sensitive information is managed safely by staff, in accordance with the home's policies and procedures.

There are no issues with young people placing themselves at risk of harm or abuse. Their welfare and safety is effectively promoted. Staff are trained in safeguarding and they are able to respond to their safeguarding duties effectively. They are trained in the use of care and control, to help them manage challenging situations.

Young people respond positively, to the care and support provided to them. So much so that restraints, unauthorised absence and safeguarding are not an issue. There have been no occurrences or concerns, in relation to any of these matters. Young people confirm there are no issues with bullying or with poor quality relationships within this home.

There have been no formal complaints made by young people, although young people are aware of the home's complaints procedure. They have been provided with a copy of the children's guide, in which, the home's complaints procedure is summarised.

Young people have developed trusting relationships with staff, and this is reflected within the low level of significant events and incidents. Young people's behaviours are managed safely, and they genuinely respect and value their relationships with individual staff. Rewards systems are used positively to promote and encourage socially acceptable behaviour. Young people respond in such a positive way that the use of sanctions are not used or needed.

All annual health and safety inspections are up to date. There is routine servicing of the home's fire fighting equipment, gas and portable electrical appliances. Such checks ensure environmental safety is promoted and that general household appliances are safe for young people to use. The home has a fire and building risk assessment in place, which staff use to identify potential hazards. Fire drills are held frequently, which ensures young people are familiar with the home's fire evacuation procedures.

Robust recruitment procedures are followed. This includes completing all of the required checks for new staff, including enhanced criminal records bureau checks, which are used to assess the suitability of staff to work with vulnerable children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The objectives of young people's placement plans are being achieved and there are positive outcomes evident in terms of young people making positive progress. Young people thrive and they clearly benefit from the good relationships they have established with staff, which underpin the positive work undertaken.

Young people receive extensive support from staff in developing their self-esteem and self-confidence to bring about change. They respond positively to the care and support provided to them evidenced, in part, by good attendance at education.

Young people have their educational achievements celebrated. They have individual education plans to describe their individual targets and goals. They have personal education plans, but these are outdated, and not reflective of their current needs or aspirations.

Young people attend the home's designated school where the effectiveness and quality of teaching is satisfactory. The welfare, health and safety of pupils was judged good at the schools recent Ofsted inspection. Young people are supported to pursue further education and they have applied for college courses, in line with their particular interests.

Young people are provided with positive individual experiences. They have a planned holiday abroad to look forward to this year, which will provide them with the opportunity to experience the life and culture of another country. They have recently experienced a helicopter ride as a celebration of their achievements, and are currently in the process of applying for a trip to India, to further their experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are met and the outcomes of their placement plans are routinely monitored. Their needs are recorded within well written placements, which outline their individualised needs for support. Weekly planners are used by staff to set young people attainable targets. These provide young people with motivation and build their confidence and self-esteem. Young people's care plans cover the outcome areas of Every Child Matters, to ensure their needs are assessed and comprehensively covered.

There are good arrangements in place to promote contact. Young people understand these arrangements and confirm contact is actively promoted for them. This ensures they are able to maintain their relationships with their families and friends. These arrangements include having friends and family visit the home and also having the opportunity to have overnight stays.

Young people's needs are reviewed and monitored by staff. Their needs are reviewed through the statutory review process; the frequency of these meetings is satisfactory. Minutes of meetings are currently unavailable but evidence was seen to show that these have been requested.

Young people feel consulted and they are involved in decisions made within the home. They attend staff meetings and are able to make a positive contribution in them. Young people are also consulted informally, as part of daily life within the home.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home is not distinguishable as a children's home and is of a similar design to other local properties. The home has well maintained gardens to the front and the rear, with trees, potted plants and shrubs. To the rear of the property is a conservatory and to the front of the home is a private driveway for staff's vehicles.

The location of the home ensures that young people are able to access places of interest to them. There is good access to public transportation links. The home provides young people with homely accommodation, which is pleasantly decorated and furnished. Photographs of young people and their achievements are proudly displayed. Young people have access to a personal computer for their study and recreational use and their bedrooms are personalised, reflecting their personalities.

Young people are approaching a stage in their lives where they need support with their independence. Evidence was available to show that the home has begun this process, by requesting a pathway plan from the placing authority. The home has obtained useful information from the National Leaving Care Advisory Service (NLCAS) to introduce a programme of work, to help young people develop their knowledge and independent living skills. The programme covers a good range of information, including practical exercises across a broad range of relevant themes. The work will help young people to prepare for adulthood.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The home has information available for young people, their families and placing authorities to show how the home operates and intends to meet young people's needs. The children's guide and Statement of Purpose both contain useful information about the service. The statement, however, requires minor amendment, to include the details of new staff, their qualifications and relevant experience.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people are encouraged to develop a positive awareness of diversity issues. They are treated as individuals and receive fair and equal treatment within the home. They are able to develop their own identities and learn about equality issues, for example, the impact of the civil rights movement on society. Young people are taught to respect themselves and others, and are provided with good support from staff.

Young people receive safe, consistent and stable care, which enables them to develop and form trusting relationships with staff. However, there have been recent staff changes, with one staff member leaving the home and another redeployed. The latter causing young people some sadness and anxiety. Young people confirm that they have excellent relationships with staff, but would like certain staff members back on the team. This issue was consequently raised with the Registered Manager.

Less than 80% of staff are now qualified to national vocational qualification standards. One in three staff are currently qualified. The others are either undertaking or are scheduled to undertake the training following their induction. Staff have all completed mandatory training and they continue to receive training to develop their knowledge and skills.

There are good systems in place for monitoring the operations of the home. The manager routinely checks the home's administration systems, and the performance of the home is monitored each month, for which a report is prepared on the home's conduct. These systems allow staff to take action, if necessary, to rectify any performance issues affecting the smooth operations of 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 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):

- ensure young people's personal educational plans are updated (NMS 14.2)
- ensure young people have a pathway plan (NMS 6.1).
- consider the views of young people in relation to staff changes (NMS 30.3)
- ensure that 80% of the work force are qualified to NVQ level 3. (NMS 29.5)