

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC361789
Inspection date	19/09/2012
Inspector	Guy Mammatt
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/03/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by the local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 10 young people aged 5 to 17 years of either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. Primarily this service provides residential assessments for children with complex individual needs and can also accommodate children in crisis, in which case their stay should be much shorter.

The purpose-built house is situated on the site of a local authority special school and has access to some of the school's facilities.

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 **good**.

The home provides exceptional quality of care for the young people to thrive in. Young people receive highly personalised care from a staff team that ensures strong links are in place with all professionals involved in their care. The collaborative approach to care planning ensures young people are working towards achievable targets with the full support of all the staff and professionals around them.

Young people have made excellent progress in their outcomes since their time of placement. Young people have excellent attendance at school and choose to interact and socialise with others. Young people live in a healthy environment and have access to an extensive range of sensory equipment and activities to promote their emotional development.

Young people exercise choice in their life at the home. Staff ensure there are effective communication systems in place to ensure young people are included in the development of the home and their daily programme.

Strong relationships exist between staff and the young people. Staff have a very good understanding of the young people's needs. This ensures the young people feel

safe at the home and prosper under the nurturing and stimulating environment created by the staff team.

Shortfalls exist in the recording of the use of physical intervention on a small number of occasions. For example, the de-escalation techniques used for avoiding the use of restraint is not always recorded. Although staff are vigilant of young people's well-being following incidents of restraint, young people should also be offered the option of being seen by a medical professional. The Registered Manager is also required to provide better evidence of consultation with children and young people, families and placing authorities as part of the monthly monitoring.

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
17B (2001)	ensure where a measure of restraint is used on a child the record under paragraph (3) must include details of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure (Regulation 17B (4) (b))	31/10/2012
34 (2001)	ensure the system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	31/10/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure where there has been physical restraint, children's homes must be able to call on medical assistance as required and children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner. (NMS 3.16)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress in developing a positive self-view and emotional resilience. Individuals that have known the young people for a long period of time have seen them settle in the placement and greatly reduce their serious

negative behaviours such as self-harming and physical violence. Young people have shown excellent progress in their social skills and have developed abilities in activities that would not have previously been possible; for example surfing and trampolining.

Young people are content at the home and have made excellent individual health achievements. They respond very well to the therapy available to help them remain calm and grounded. Young people eat well and have regular sleep patterns. This allows them to take part in an increased amount of daily activities than was previously possible and display a happier disposition. Placing authorities representatives have seen 'remarkable progress' in the young people's development since being at the placement.

Young people have excellent attendance at school and take part in the full national curriculum. Young people benefit from shared targeting across the school and home to support their achievements and learning of life skills. Young people benefit from the early involvement of education staff at the start of their placement to ensure they are familiar with both environments quickly. Young people benefit from this cohesive approach to their education and learn skills that will benefit them in later life.

Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviours or offending as their daily routine is well managed with effective support packages in place from the home. This ensure young people are kept safe and do not engage in criminal activity.

Young people have excellent access to family contact to ensure they remain in touch with people that are important to them. Staff provided excellent levels of support to ensure beneficial contact takes place and good follow up work is in place to ensure young people are supported throughout their family contact. This means young people remain part of their cultural heritage and have a sense of belonging to a family group.

Quality of care

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

Staff place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practise in the home, and their achievements are always recognised and celebrated. Staff are supportive to the young people's needs and create an approachable, encouraging atmosphere within the home. Young people benefit from well-structured routines specifically planned around their individual needs. This allows young people to have positive and constructive relationships with staff and each other and settle in their placement.

Staff build exceptional effective partnerships with external professionals to ensure consistency in the care provided to young people. Strong links are in place to ensure all parties are working towards the same common targets for the young people. Staff effectively challenge any shortfalls in partner organisations to ensure young people receive the support they need.

The views and wishes of the young people are consistently sought and included into the running of the home. Staff effectively challenge barriers in communication levels to ensure all young people have their choices recognised. Staff use a variety of communication methods to meet the needs of the young people. Staff also have strong relationships with the young people. This ensures staff are familiar with how each young person express themselves and ensures they are always appropriately responded to.

Staff have high aspirations for the care provided to the young people within the home and placement plans are of an excellent quality to support this. They include the detailed sensory stimulus for the young people, target plans written in conjunction with education professionals and a 'This is me' document put together by the young people. This ensures the home's contribution to the placement plans focuses on clear measurable outcomes for all staff to use; and fully involves the young people as much as possible.

The home provides exceptional health care to the young people. Young people have access to the necessary medical practitioners to ensure all their basic health needs are met as well as very good access to a range of therapeutic services. The home also provides a balanced nutritious diet and plenty of exercise to meet the needs of growing young people. As a result their psychological and physical health receives excellent promotion to ensure their continued growth and development.

Staff consistently support the young people in their education attendance and ensure there is an effective handover at all times with education staff. Staff provide a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities for the young people to take part following their education day. This includes well thought through activities within the home environment and trips away from the home; for example to the beach, play parks and National Trusts sites. This ensures young people are stimulated in full-time education to further their learning and also participate in a wide range of purposeful activities out of school to build their self-confidence and social interaction.

The home is appropriately designed and maintained to a high standard to suit the needs of the young people. Arrangements for storing the medication are safe and effective. This ensures young people live in a home that promotes their welfare and provides them with a homely environment that makes them feel comfortable.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe at the home and are suitably protected from any bullying. Parents are satisfied their children are well looked after and are confident they are protected from harm while living at the home.

Care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual young people. This ensures the appropriate level of support is in place at all times and young people do not go missing from the home.

Staff effectively use positive behaviour management strategies to encourage young people to remain engaged in conversation, games and positive motivators. Staff adhere to the positive support plan and risk assessments in place for young people to ensure young people are kept safe at all times. Consequently any incidents of negative behaviour by the young people are quickly resolved and they will not often engage in any prolonged behaviour that is detrimental to their welfare.

The use of restrictive physical intervention has been carried out to ensure young people do not cause harm to others or themselves. The types of restraint are accurately and clearly recorded. The majority of occasions have detailed the de-escalation techniques used by staff prior to performing the restraint; however, on a small number of occasions this has not been completed. This means it is not clear on all occasions the methods used to avoid the need to use physical intervention. Medical assistance has not also been offered to young people following a restraint. Therefore young people have not had the opportunity to seek medical assistance even though staff may not perceive them to have been injured.

Staff and agency staff are carefully selected and monitored before they start employment at the home. This ensures only appropriate individuals have access to work alongside young people. The home is physically safe and appropriately secure; taking into account the characteristics of the young people cared for.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed by an experienced Registered Manager. The Registered Manager has ensured the one requirement from the last inspection has been met. The Statement of Purpose is now up to date with the details of the entire staff team. The management team provides effective leadership to ensure all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are empowered and demonstrate commitment and a great deal of enthusiasm in their work. This means that young people benefit from a cohesive staff team all working together in their best interests.

The home meets its aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose and has a comprehensive developmental plan in place to ensure the continued development of the service. A strength of the home is that it works very well alongside other agencies and continually seeks their feedback and involvement in the care provided at the home. This means young people benefit from a holistic view of their care and gain the best possible outcomes.

The home is inventive and open to new ideas that will benefit the young people. The management team and placing authorities monitor the progress that young people make and are clear about the difference the home has made. Specialist autism training for the staff team has had a noticeable impact on the progress made by many of the young people at the home.

Staff receive good levels of supervision and frequent training opportunities to meet their individual needs. This ensures staff are guided to fulfil their roles to the best of their abilities and young people are looked after by a team that is well trained and has an up-to-date understanding of Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The management team carries out regular monitoring of the home to ensure records are kept accurately and to identify any areas of weakness within the home. The management team makes good use of the monitoring visits to ensure high standards of care are always provided. The monthly monitoring by the Registered Manager does not include consultation with children and young people, families and placing authorities; even though there is good evidence elsewhere of regular feedback and consultation taking place. This means it is not evidence in the monthly monitoring that the views of important individuals are included to gather their opinion of the standard of care within the home.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated at the home have been notified to the appropriate authorities. This ensures good working practice is followed by the Registered Manager and there is transparency in the management of serious incidents at the home.

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.