

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC363268
Inspector	David Coulter
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Laura Emily Cave
Date of last inspection	20/01/2014

Inspection date	08/07/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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The home provides care to extremely vulnerable young people who have experienced instability and change in their lives. The current residents have experienced a number of placement breakdowns before arriving at the home. They are now settled and have formed meaningful relationships with staff. Outcomes for young people are positive and they are making significant progress in many aspects of their lives, including their education. This represents excellent progress from their starting points on admission to the home.

Staff have created a warm and nurturing environment that operates within clear behavioural boundaries. Staff reinforce positive behaviour and success is recognised and celebrated. A comprehensive placement planning system ensures that the physical, social and emotional needs of each young person are appropriately identified and guidance produced for staff on how they can be effectively met. The progress of each young person is subject to on-going monitoring. Young people indicated that they are happy in the home; with the level of staff support they receive; with their accommodation and the quality and quantity of food provided.

The home operates with a team of highly motivated permanent staff who are responsive to the changing needs of the young people in their care. Staff are well-equipped for their role and continually increase their knowledge and skills by

accessing appropriate training opportunities. Staff are led by an extremely able and child-focused manager. Staff liaise effectively with their educational and therapeutic colleagues to ensure key information is shared and a consistency in approach attained.

Safeguarding practice underpins all aspects of the home's approach. Staff are proactive in working with young people and are effective in helping them develop strategies to keep themselves safe. Staff are not risk averse and young people are provided with regular opportunities to participate in a broad range of exciting social and recreational activities. Through their involvement in daily tasks associated with communal living young people are helped to acquire life skills that are appropriate to their ages and levels of understanding.

There are no requirements or recommendations for improvement arising from this inspection.

Full report

Information about this children's home

A private company owns and operates this children's home. The setting accommodates up to three young people who have complex emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. Young people normally attend the company's specialist education unit and organisation's therapeutic services.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/01/2014	Interim	good progress
08/08/2013	Full	outstanding
15/11/2012	Interim	good progress
10/07/2012	Full	good

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people are settled and are making significant progress that is reflected in many aspect of their lives, including an increase in self confidence and ability to make and sustain relationships. Young people respond positively to the individualised care and attention they receive from members of the home's highly motivated staff team. Young people and staff are clearly at ease in each other's company and have mutual respect for each other.

The specific, physical, social and emotional difficulties young people experience are identified through a comprehensive assessment process and detailed placement plans provide guidance for staff on how young people's needs can be appropriately met. Risk assessments are effectively used to identify any areas of potential concern associated with a young person's behaviour. Young people play a key role in the development of their placement plans and work alongside staff to identify a set of achievable short term goals. This approach allows young people to measure their progress in areas, such as, education, behaviour and the acquisition of social and life-skills.

Young people develop healthy lifestyles and are made aware of the importance of eating wisely and taking regular exercise. They are introduced to a range of different foods, including those from other cultures, and contribute weekly to the development of the homes menu plans. Menu plans incorporate their individual tastes and preferences. Young people keep fit by regularly participating in a range of sporting and leisure activities. Each individual's physical and mental health is monitored on an ongoing basis and all medication regimes are subject to regular review. Young people are informed about health issues and advice and guidance is provided in an age appropriate manner. Medical interventions and personal care are sensitively managed.

Both the home's current residents access New Forest Care's school and their attendance levels are excellent. Young people are assisted by staff with their homework and there is an expectation that they will read to staff for at least a quarter of an hour each day. Young people's reading has significantly improved. The social development of each young person is given a high priority and staff provide many and varied opportunities for them to extend their social horizons. Each young person is encouraged to develop their own hobbies and interests. By accessing clubs and organisations young people have been able to establish friendships with other young people in the local area.

Clear boundaries, set and reinforced consistently by staff, create a safe and nurturing environment in which young people can grow and develop. Staff have a zero tolerance of any form of bullying or discriminatory behaviour. The interaction between

young people is closely monitored and staff intervene if they believe an individual is being teased or exploited. Staff help young people to discuss and think through the possible consequences of their behaviour and regular house meetings and individual sessions are successfully used to discuss relationships and resolve the inevitable difficulties that arise through communal living. Staff reinforce positive behaviour with praise and rewards. Sanctions are only used for serious misdemeanours. Young people respond positively to the home's approach and there is clear evidence that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are continuing to decrease.

Specialist therapists help young people to understand and articulate their often complex feelings. New Forest Care workers are pro-active in initiating direct work with parents to help improve the often difficult relationships that have developed between them and their children. The importance of such work was recognised by a member of staff who indicated that, 'helping parents resolve the difficulties they experience with their children is crucially important if a successful return home is to be eventually achieved'.

Quality of care

outstanding

Most young people arrive at the home having experienced disruption and uncertainty in their lives, in many instances this has included multiple placement breakdowns. Staff continuity ensures young people receive much needed stability within a warm and nurturing environment. Staff successfully establish meaningful relationships with young people and this provides a sound basis for effective working. Staff are aspirational for the young people in their care and expectations are high. Staff promote the concept of mutual respect and young people are brought to task for the use of inappropriate language or anti-social behaviours. Staff receive advice and guidance from therapeutic staff, including a consultant psychiatrist, to help them develop strategies that will address established anti-social and self-destructive patterns of behaviour.

Staff closely monitor the behaviours and moods of each young person and identify antecedents and possible triggers surrounding significant incidents. All significant incidents are appropriately recorded and reported.

Although young people can present with challenging behaviour, staff are proficient in diffusing volatile situations by deploying a range of effective diversionary techniques. Appropriate staffing levels and effective supervision ensures each young person receives the levels of support they need to maintain positive behaviour. Physical restraints are only ever used if a young person is putting themselves or others at risk. Evidence indicates incidents resulting in physical interventions decrease significantly as young people settle.

The views of young people about their lives within the home are sought formally through regular house meetings and informally through individual discussions with staff. Young people indicated they would have no difficulty in conveying worries or

concerns to any of the staff. Young people are given a choice each day of which staff they would like to accompany them on activities. Young people are aware of how to make complaints and raise concerns. No complaints or concerns have been raised since the last inspection. Young people indicated they are happy in the home and with the care they receive. The excellent lines of communication staff have established with their educational and therapeutic colleagues ensure key information relating to the care of each young person is appropriately shared and a consistency in approach maintained.

The domestic nature of the home provides a warm and homely environment. Each young person is provided with their own spacious room and bathroom. Young people have personalised their rooms by choosing their own décor and introducing their own posters and pictures. Young people are satisfied with their accommodation and value their own personal space. They reported that the home's heating and hot water system are effective and they always have enough water for baths or showers. Regular health and safety checks ensure the home's environment remains safe. There is an effective reporting system that ensures all maintenance issues are dealt with in a timely fashion.

Young people are encouraged to participate in life within the local village and access community groups that can meet their interests. One young person is currently active within an amateur dramatic group while the other regularly attends the local scout troop. Young people regularly access the local countryside for walks and cycle rides. The home has its own transport and young people are provided with opportunities to access leisure facilities such as swimming pools and cinemas in nearby towns.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Staff are aware of each individual's young person's level of understanding and provide opportunities for young people to acquire a range of age appropriate social and life-skills. The majority of young people are extremely vulnerable and through their behaviours can, unintentionally, put themselves at risk. Staff effectively work alongside young people to heighten their awareness of risk and help them develop strategies for keeping safe. By continuously monitoring the behaviour of individuals and adjusting them in response to significant incidents and changing circumstances young people are kept safe. Staff successfully help young people to modify risk-taking behaviours. Appropriate staffing levels and effective supervision ensure young people do not go missing. There have been no incidents of a young person going missing since the last inspection.

Members of the home's highly motivated staff team are recruited via a comprehensive and robust recruitment process that determines their suitability to work with vulnerable young people. All new staff complete a detailed induction programme that includes specific training on safeguarding. Staff are aware of their individual responsibilities in regard to the reporting of any safeguarding worries or

concerns. Staff aim to ensure that young people do not have contact with inappropriate adults. The home does not deploy volunteers and adults who have regular contact with young people, such as those in youth organisations, are appropriately vetted. Access to the home is limited and all visitors have to report to staff and sign in.

The health and safety of young people and staff is taken seriously and regular health and safety checks ensure that the home's environment is kept free from hazards. The fire alarm system is tested weekly and regular fire evacuations guarantee staff and young people remain conversant with procedures.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The home's manager and staff are continually striving to ensure that the service they offer is in the best interests of the young people in their care. Although the manager has only occupied her post for a relatively short period of time, her organisational skills and effective leadership have had an extremely positive impact on the operation of the home and the lives of its residents. The home's permanent staff team provides a consistency in care that is conducive to the development of meaningful relationships. Staff are extremely responsive to the needs of the individuals in their care and have modified working practices appropriately to ensure they are effectively meeting the needs of a younger age group. For example, opportunities are provided each day for young people to engage in play activities. The operation of the home is reflected in the manager's three monthly Regulation 34 reports and the monthly Regulation 33 reports carried out by a company representative. Such reports are comprehensive, insightful and produced within appropriate timescales.

Communication between staff on different shifts is good and regular team meetings provide an effective forum for discussing the progress of each young person and all aspects of the delivery of care. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have access to a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that are continually updated in response to regulatory and legislative changes. The home operates within a culture of training and professional development and there is an expectation that staff will access the frequent training opportunities available to them to develop their knowledge and skills in caring for young people with complex care needs. A record is kept on staff files of all courses attended.

The home's new Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the high quality care the home provides. A well developed placement planning process ensures each young person is treated as an individual with their own specific physical, social and emotional needs. New Forest Care's integrated approach ensures that the physical, social, emotional and educational development of each young person is considered holistically. Monitoring processes are extremely robust and the progress that each young person makes is reflected in the regular reports produced for placing authorities and parents.

The home is appropriately resourced, operates with high staffing levels and provides funds that enable young people to engage in a wide range of activities within the local community. Records and documents contain recent and relevant information and are stored in appropriately locked facilities. There were no requirements or actions arising from the last report that required addressing.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.