

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC366002
Inspection date	20/08/2014
Inspector	Alicea Churchward
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	21/02/2014
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is a private children's home which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. A registered school is also on site.

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 **adequate**.

The home is in a transitional period; stability has been affected due to inconsistent management arrangements. Three managers have been in post since the last full inspection. Young people overall are not generally satisfied with the quality of care in the home and this is evident in the number of issues raised during the inspection. Staff are positive about the new manager and say he 'is a breath of fresh air' and they are confident that he is providing good leadership in the home. Young people say 'things have been changed' although they feel there are still inconsistencies that have affected young people's relationships with staff.

Young people know how to make complaints and have been prepared to do so. However there is further work to be done to empower young people as more recently some young people have reported that there is 'no point' in complaining. This needs to be addressed to ensure they can have confidence in knowing complaints will be listened too and taken seriously.

Despite this outcomes for young people overall remain good. Staff are clear about safeguarding young people and the procedures to follow should there be a concern. They also constructively encourage young people to attend education, ensure they have good access to activities and have worked with young people to reduce the episodes of missing which have reduced. One social worker said 'communication is pretty good ... generally (my young person) has made great progress ... staff have bent over backwards to keep them in education (my young person) has done really well and has come on in leaps and bounds.' Young people say that they think that the new manager will sort things out and staff report favourably about the recent

changes.

Areas for development include; notifying Ofsted of any significant incidents, sending manager's monitoring reports to Ofsted, providing an overview of all complaints made and their outcomes in the last twelve months, ensuring that the Local Authority Designated Officer is contacted about any concerns raised by young people about staff; ensuring that the independent visitor robustly monitors any complaints made by young people. Although bullying is not reported by young people they would benefit from a greater understanding of what the term means. Two recommendations are carried forward from the last inspection to ensure staff have training in facilitating contact and include young people's views in the sanctions record.

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
28 (2001)	ensure that children's case files include the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; in this case a copy of any of any statement of special educational needs maintained in relation to the child under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, with details of any such needs (Regulation 28 (a) and Schedule 3 (12))	19/03/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that all significant events are notified to Ofsted (Regulation 30 (1))	30/09/2014
34 (2001)	ensure that the monitoring reports undertaken by the manager are sent to Ofsted once every three months (Regulation 34 (2))	30/09/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose (Regulation 17B (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i))	20/08/2014
24 (2001)	supply Ofsted with a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding twelve months and the action that was taken (Regulation 24 (7))	30/09/2014
16 (2001)	ensure the prompt referral to the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated, of any allegation of abuse or neglect affecting any child accommodated in the children's home (Regulation 16 (2))	20/08/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that Regulation 33 visits to the home include robust monitoring of any complaints (Regulation 33 (4)(b))	30/09/2014
31 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are kept clean; in this case ensuring the oven and surrounding	30/09/2014

	areas thoroughly cleaned (Regulation 31 (2)(e))	
28 (2001)	ensure that children's case files include the information, documents and records specified in Schedule 3 relating to that child; in this case a copy of any of any statement of special educational needs maintained in relation to the child under section 324 of the Education Act 1996, with details of any such needs. (Regulation 28 (a) and Schedule 3 (12)	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have appropriate training, supervision and support if they are required to supervise and facilitate contact (NMS 9.2)
- ensure where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, young people are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that work is undertaken with children so that they understand any bullying is unacceptable. (NMS 3.11)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are supported on an individual basis by staff who provide guidance and advice when it is needed. The support of specialist services to develop an understanding of their backgrounds is secured when young people need additional input. Young people have a key worker who spends time with them on an individual basis and gives them an opportunity to discuss any issues which are significant to them.

Young people's wishes and feelings are actively sought through general discussions, residents meetings and individual one-to-one sessions. Staff members routinely consult young people on all aspects of their care including care planning and changes in the home, for example, menu planning, education, family contact and activities. This means young people have good opportunity to influence the care they receive.

Young people enjoy good health and are registered with medical practitioners. Health care plans are in place and suitably address individual health care needs. A healthy lifestyle is promoted and young people are encouraged and supported to become involved in activities within the local community, for example attending the local gym. They have frequent opportunities to participate in outdoor and community based activities such as ice skating, horse riding, go karting, going to the cinema and spending time with their friends. The home is in the process of building a music studio and providing instruments in the home for young people to access.

Young people are making progress with their respective educational placements. Education is available on site and young people have also successfully attended vocational projects outside of the home. Attainment is variable but improving and, given individual starting points, is good.

Young people benefit from the support they are given to build and maintain positive contact with family, carers and friends. This helps to keep in touch with people who are important to them. As a result, young people have a clear sense of identity as well as established support networks with family and stronger community links.

The young people are given support by the staff to gain skills to help them with independent living when they move from the home. This includes cooking, shopping and budgeting. Pathway plans and advisors are in place to identify areas for developing life skills to enable transition to adulthood.

Quality of care

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

There have been a number of changes in the management of the home. Relationships between staff and young people are adequate as a result. Young people raise a number of matters with the inspector about issues they feel need to be addressed including consistency and relationships. These matters were fed back to the manager and the responsible individual who have agreed to investigate matters further. Observations during the course of the inspection were that relationships between staff and young people were adequate, professional and respectful. Young people were comfortable in the presence of staff and discussed their concerns openly.

There is a complaints policy and procedure in place. Records in the home demonstrate that when young people have made complaints formally, they have generally been addressed although there was a time recently when this was not felt to be the case. Some young people had expressed a lack of confidence that their complaints had been addressed to their satisfaction. However they are now more confident as a result of recent changes in management. They believe that the new manager will be able to resolve their complaints.

Young people are encouraged to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Individual behaviour management plans support risk assessments to identify triggers for negative behaviour and effective strategies are in place to support positive behaviour management. Regular discussions take place about appropriate behaviour; this helps young people to understand their individual circumstances and take positive steps to make the necessary changes in their lives. Daily incentives and rewards systems encourage young people's participation and have proved to be successful. Consequently, sanctions are appropriately used and assist young people to accept the consequence of their behaviour.

Overall placement plans are good. All young people's placement plans in place are monitored. Staff work in close partnership with young people, their placing social workers and, where possible, their parents. This ensures that the individual care needs of the young people living at the home are known and are addressed in their individual care arrangements. Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of their care plans. Young people regularly attend these meetings and can give their views directly to the social care professionals involved in meeting their care needs.

Young people benefit from living in a substantial premises and spacious grounds. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as personal as possible. There is a lounge where young people can relax and socialise. The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can talk and enjoy a meal together. The home would benefit from a thorough clean paying particular attention to the cooker and ovens in the kitchen. Young people have differing opinions some say the home 'is nice' or that 'the house is a mess...' others are more homely.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say generally that the home is a safe place to live; they can identify staff that they are able to speak to about any concerns. They also say that there is no bullying; however more work needs to be done with young people to help them identify what constitutes bullying behaviour.

Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and the home has policies and procedures in place which underpin practice. Recording confirms that there has been good liaison between the home, placing authority and local children's services, using the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. There was a recent incident that was not appropriately reported to the responsible individual who is the designated safeguarding officer for the organisation; he has agreed to take this matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer. This meant that the services procedures were not followed in one instance so there was a delay in reporting a complaint to the LADO. This has subsequently been addressed.

There have been incidents where young people have been missing; this has significantly reduced for some young people. The home has clear procedures for dealing with any incidents and has good relationships with the designated missing from care co-ordinator in the local police force. The joint work has seen a reduction in the number of incidents.

Sanctions are relevant and reflect the age and understanding of the young people. Any sanctions imposed are reviewed regularly for appropriateness and effectiveness. Young people have made some comments in the records to say what their views are but this is not included in all cases. Personalised behaviour management strategies are used. These contain good, individualised details for staff to follow when

managing young people's behaviour. Physical restraint is used to manage behaviour where a young person puts themselves or others at serious risk at the home. However, the record of restraint could not be located at the time of this inspection. The home does maintain copies of incident forms which also contain this information; but this does not meet with regulatory requirements.

Young people are protected from hazards by a wide range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks, including fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and young people know what to do in case of an emergency. There are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect young people.

Leadership and management

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

Since the last full inspection in June 2013 the organisation have appointed three managers to the home. The service has been without a Registered Manager in excess of 26 weeks. An application has been submitted to Ofsted to register the current manager. They are experienced in the management of residential childcare and have held senior roles previously. They are currently qualified at level 3 in child care and are undertaking a relevant level 5 qualification in management.

Overall the failure to have a registered manager in post has caused a lack of consistency; particularly for young people. The home has not complied with some of the requirements and both of recommendations issued at the last inspection. There has been a lack of detailed monitoring overtime; for example a quarterly report have not been submitted to HMCI. However, progress is now being made with the introduction of the new manager.

At the time of the last inspection requirements were made in relation to repairing the perimeter fencing to prevent access to the railway and the home having written risk assessment in relation to access; this has been addressed and now provides security and protection for the young people. Another requirement about the overall cleanliness of the home particularly the ovens and surrounding areas has not been addressed. Visitor's identification is now always requested prior to then being given access to the home; this improves the safety of young people. The monitoring form for the monthly manager's reports has been amended to include the views of young people's parents and placing authorities. One Special Educational Needs assessment was not present but has been requested by the home; chasing this information has not been robust enough to obtain it.

Two recommendations were made in relation to staff training in facilitating contact; evidence of this taking place could not be located. Although records do not reflect the training undertaken the staff spoken to were clear about their role in facilitating contact. Additionally obtaining the views of young people in relation to sanctions and restraint; the sanctions record does not demonstrate this is the case, few views are

recorded.

A Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a good children's guide to the statement which is appropriate to the age and understanding of the children accommodated. Young people receive a copy of it before they come to live at the home or on admission so that they know what to expect if they live here.

The home is required to notify HMCI, Ofsted, of significant events; this has not happened for example when police have attended the home.

Independent visits to the home are adequate and give a sound overview of the home's functioning and the views of young people. However there have been some areas identified for action that have not been addressed in a timely way due to the inconsistent management of the home. There was a recent incident of a failure to report an allegation in a timely that was not highlighted as a result of this monitoring.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.