

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC372619
Inspection date	02/08/2012
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	07/02/2012
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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 is a small private children's home catering for one young person aged from 12 to 17 years who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Sensitive support enables young people to make good progress and achieve good outcomes. The staff team are motivated and committed to their work. They form meaningful relationships with young people who at times exhibit high-risk behaviours. They successfully educate and support young people to keep themselves safe and reduce risk taking behaviours. This enables young people to make good progress in other aspects of their lives.

Safeguarding young people's welfare is placed at the highest priority in terms of both the health and safety of the environment and promoting their physical and emotional well-being. Effective internal and external monitoring processes provide continuous quality assurance. This helps to maintain the home's good standard of care and assists in promoting the on-going development and improvement of the service.

Young people hold their quality of care in high regard. This extends to viewing the staff as strength of the home. A good rapport exists between young people and staff that is both trusting and sincere and promotes young people's confidence in expressing their views and opinions.

The home has an energetic, motivated and well qualified manager, who leads by example and is ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people cared for. Rigorous monitoring of care delivery, through well-maintained recording systems ensures that both strengths and weaknesses are identified and effective remedial action taken.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people's life chances are significantly improved as a result of the care provided by the staff team. Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying them their individuality. Young people enjoy positive relationships with the staff group, based upon mutual respect and positive regard; this helps them to improve their self-image and build up their emotional resilience. The competent staff team have successfully created a nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries, but remains both homely and supportive.

Young people have ready access to all the primary health services they require. They receive the support and encouragement they need to access any medical appointments. Young people take an increasingly independent role in the provision of their own health care, as appropriate, in order to help them prepare for adulthood. Young people access any specialist health provision they may require including any support needed with their emotional or mental health. They benefit from good support and education; this improves their emotional and sexual health.

Young people retain strong links with their families and receive help to maintain or improve any relationships which may be difficult for them. This helps them retain an understanding and appreciation of their heritage and the key relationships they will require in later life.

Young people's attendance and achievement in education have both improved during their stay at the home. Young people develop aspirations and work hard to achieve these. Attendance at school is good in respect of all young people living at the home and they attain well. Their individual support needs are met in ways that suit them and young people can access additional support as and when they need it.

Quality of care

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

Young people clearly benefit from the security and structure that exists within this home. A competent staff team have created a homely, nurturing environment that has well-defined boundaries. These boundaries are consistent and help to give young people a feeling of security without denying their individuality.

Good adult role models, emphasise the equal value of each individual, this help young people understand the negative impact of stereotypical gender, cultural and age-related issues. The good quality day-to-day care provided ensures that each young person's individual cultural and gender needs are identified and met.

Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, based on mutual respect, which enables them to form meaningful and sustainable attachments. Young people,

benefit from individualised programmes of support. These are in line with their identified needs, provided by both the staff in the home and independent specialists, such as clinical psychologists. Comprehensive care plans identify areas for development based upon young people's individual skills and abilities.

The home provides young people with good support for their health needs. All young people are registered with the local doctor and dental surgeries, and have regular access to an optician. Medication is safely stored and administered. All staff are trained in the safe administration of medication and in how to deliver basic first aid. The home provides young people with appropriate support and advice regarding their emotional, physical and sexual development and has developed effective links with external agencies to support this process.

Staff are aware of each young person's strengths. Staff provide a very supportive environment in which young people can develop their independence and learn new tasks. Staff display a committed approach to caring for young people. They offer advice and support on how to stay fit and well. Members of staff encourage young people to lead an active life and to take regular exercise. Young people receive a varied diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, which helps to keep them healthy. There is a good approach within the home to promoting the health and well-being of young people. Staff support young people to take charge of their own health care to better prepare them for adulthood. The staff group provides the right balance between nurturing and enabling young people to develop appropriate self-reliance. Young people have their individual cultural, religious, language and racial needs effectively identified and addressed. They have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concerns.

The home works effectively with schools and other agencies to help young people get the education they need. Young people are supported and encouraged to attend regularly and to achieve to the best of their ability. Staff have high expectations of young people and this encourages young people to have high, but realistic aspirations. Staff provide structured support with young people's education including helping with homework, this helps support the improving educational successes being achieved by the young people at the home.

Young people are actively involved in their care planning they understand and can clearly describe the care and support they receive and the objectives they are working to achieve. Young people's progress and success is shared regularly with placing social workers and parents, to ensure that they are up-to-date with developments. Placement meetings and reviews take place at appropriate intervals. Young people confirm they are encouraged to contribute to their review and planned care. This ensures that all decisions are known and understood by all and can be implemented effectively into the daily care planning arrangements. Care plans include all relevant information regarding young people's needs. This ensures that staff can deliver care that focuses on the individual needs of each young person.

Communication between staff and young people is good, which results in staff being able to respond effectively; this ensures that young people's needs and wishes are

well known. Young people have regular meetings with their key worker to discuss progress and any issues of concern. They confirm that they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in line with their individual needs. As a result, they feel valued and actively influence the running of the home. Young people present well, wear appropriate clothing and have sufficient belongings to meet their needs. They receive pocket money and appropriate allowances to help purchase clothing and toiletries of their choice.

Young people enjoy living in a fairly isolated rural area. The home provides transport so that young people are able to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to make them as comfortable and personal as possible. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can socialise, enjoy a meal together and talk informally. This helps young people to develop their confidence and social skills.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe at the home and they are happy that the staff promote their safety. The home has a very comprehensive set of individualised assessments of risk for the young people in residence. These cover aspects of their potential behaviour, the environment and the activities they wish to undertake. Risk assessments are proactive, identifying potential risks and providing effective strategies to help to minimise these.

Young people understand that the boundaries in place are there to ensure their safety. They are invited to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions, which helps them develop understanding and responsibility.

The use of sanctions is fair and consistent. Staff work hard, guided by other relevant professionals, to enable young people to moderate and improve their behaviour. There is an emphasis on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours, rather than purely punishing those behaviours identified as being unacceptable. This enables young people to develop more socially acceptable behaviour and better prepares them to interact more positively with the wider community.

Young people confirm that staff use physical interventions infrequently, only as a last resort and when necessary to ensure the safety of all. Most issues are resolved by the skilful application of staff support and the sensitive use of conflict resolution techniques. The home's manager monitors each intervention, ensuring that the intervention is necessary, applied correctly and comprehensively recorded. The manager also ensures that young people are aware of their right to complain, receive any medical attention if required or requested and that social workers and, where appropriate, parents are fully informed.

Staff receive regular and wide-ranging training in safeguarding. As a result, they

demonstrate a good understanding of the action they should take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Effective working with external partners, such as the Local Authority Designated Officers, ensures the continued development of staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. The episodes when young people are missing from care have reduced considerably since the home's last inspection. Clear boundaries are set and included in each young person's behaviour management plans. Staff are aware of these plans and follow them consistently.

The home has a good range of detailed policies and procedures covering such issues as prevention of bullying, complaints, safeguarding and behaviour management. Staff have a good knowledge of these policies and they are effectively implemented. Staff receive comprehensive training with regular updates in all these areas, which enables them to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. The regular and effective monitoring of the home's records and staff practice contribute to ensuring that young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs.

The home has a vigorous health and safety regime. This ensures that all fire precautions, drills and equipment servicing are conducted routinely, consistently and within timescales set by the relevant regulations. Good staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce any risk of harm. The organisation's effective recruitment procedures ensure the careful selection recruitment and retention of staff. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well. New staff are comprehensively vetted prior to their deployment in the home and before having unsupervised access to any young person. This ensures young people are safe and have a staff team who know them well.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a well-managed service that is having a good impact on their outcomes and life experiences. The home's Registered Manager provides good leadership and support to the staff group. This means they provide consistent high quality care to the young people living in the home. Open and honest dialogue helps young people learn from their mistakes. Consequently, young people make significant changes in the way they react to others and in the choices that they make. The managers and staff team are clear about the aims and objectives of the service. This is effectively communicated to placing local authorities and the young people who come to live in the home.

The home has a clear accessible and comprehensive Statement of Purpose and young person's guide. Giving young people, their families and placing authority's good information about the services offered by the home. The young person's guide is age appropriate, accessible and is explained to young people at the point of placement by a member of the staff team. The financial viability of the provider is clearly shown by the development plans that show dates of further staff training and planned maintenance and decoration to ensure the physical environment is

maintained to a high standard. Young people confirm that they are generally treated with respect and dignity and are supported by staff to overcome significant and complex issues.

Staff receive good support and guidance through a clear management structure. This structure is successful at meeting the service aims that are to foster social awareness and mutual respect within the home and wider community. It achieves this by encouraging a happy and caring atmosphere in an extremely professional and motivating environment. Consistent and regular supervision, coupled with team meetings, provide staff with good opportunities to formally discuss their role, their professional development and the impact of working with young people with complex needs.

All staff members comment positively about the manager's commitment, child-centred approach, staff support and clear monitoring processes. Clear lines of accountability in the home enable a stable and structured environment for young people. Staff duty rotas and staff deployment confirm that the home keeps sufficient staff on the duty rota at all times. The home has a very good complaints system which is clearly and effectively communicated to the young people. Three complaints have been made since the home's last inspection. Young people confirmed that they know how to complain and that they feel confident that any such complaint would be dealt with properly.

Staff are provided with quality induction, further training, support and resources and as a result understand the developmental needs of young people. This comprehensive training covers all mandatory areas such as safeguarding, behaviour management and first aid. The staff have a strong focus on promoting positive outcomes and to enhance the well-being of young people. The staff work proactively to help young people overcome barriers and to succeed. Good communication between staff ensures that young people's individual needs are consistently met. Young people take an active part in the running of the home and they are encouraged to make their views known, through discussions with staff and by attending house meetings. Staff ensure that a safe, secure and nurturing environment is maintained which assists young people to make real progress and to fulfil their individual potential.

The manager has established rigorous internal quality assurance monitoring systems. It is clear that all reporting systems are checked and the manager regularly comments if any record fails to meet either the home's policies and procedures or national regulations. Regular internal monitoring reports are produced which help the home to develop its practice and ensure that young people are receiving the care and support they need. Regular Regulation 33 visits take place to provide additional quality assurance mechanisms and involve consulting young people wherever possible. The managers have a strong commitment to meeting young people's needs. The level of progress young people have made, despite their complex needs is a testament to the impact the managers have made to help young people.

The home has comprehensive development plans for continuing improvement.

Records are clear, up to date and stored securely, and would contribute significantly to the young people's understanding of their life in care, if they choose to access these documents. The registered person notifies the appropriate authorities about all significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in 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.