

## Inspection report for children's home

---

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC376719        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 19/12/2013      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Carole Moore    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

---

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 05/12/2012 |
|--------------------------------|------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 home is one of several homes in the area, operated by a private company. It provides care and accommodation for up to two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The company has its own school for children not attending mainstream education provision, and can also offer weekly therapy.

### 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**.

This is a good service that impacts positively on young people's lives. As a result, young people are making good progress in relation to their starting points. This is underpinned by high quality support from staff who know the young people well and have high expectations of them.

The staff team are knowledgeable and aware of their roles and responsibilities in terms of keeping young people safe. The home provides a warm and nurturing environment that reflects the interests and lives of the young people living there.

Young people are fully consulted about their daily routines and support arrangements. Staff are always available and approachable. They encourage young people to express their views and wishes so they can influence how they are looked after. Young people also benefit from having one-to-one time with their key workers so they can talk about matters that are important and more personal to them.

Other professionals state that staff are very child-centred and take a real interest in promoting young people's well-being; 'The staff group work exceptionally well with the young people and provide a real nurturing environment.'

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has established good systems to monitor and review the quality of care to young people.

As a result of this visit, three recommendations have been made in relation to the

development plan, ensuring strong and proactive relationships with the police and formalising consultation with young people, their parents and other professionals.

## Areas for improvement

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the views of the child, the child's family, social worker and independent reviewing officer (IRO) are sought regularly on the child's care (NMS 1.4)
- ensure the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home, in respect of it being a working document (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the home has the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols in place and there is a strong and proactive relationship with the police. (NMS 5.6 and Volume 5 2.81)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are in general good health and lead healthy lifestyles. They access the services and support needed to meet their physical, emotional and psychological needs. They talk to staff about their health and well-being. One young person said, 'Staff are always there to support me.' They are actively involved in making decisions about their health, physical exercise and menu planning which helps them to stay fit and well. They maintain and build on good health routines such as attending regular health appointments, cleaning their teeth as part of their daily routine and ensuring good personal hygiene.

Young people are actively and positively involved in activities with peers in the community. For example, they visit a local swimming pool, cubs, dance groups and football clubs. They also are actively involved in events in the local village and the young people contribute to baking cakes for these events.

The educational achievement of young people is good, given the barriers which their emotional health and behaviour difficulties pose. Young people who are not in mainstream education can access the company's school which provides an individual programme of education tailored to their needs. Young people aspire to achieve well and express positive attitudes about the importance of education. Their attendance levels are good. Staff and school work well together to help young people to achieve to the best of their potential.

Young people are encouraged to keep good levels of contact with family and friends. All young people's contact arrangements are fully detailed and agreed in their placement plans. The safety of young people and their welfare is always promoted.

Young people benefit from direct face-to-face visits and telephone calls. As a result, this helps to maintain continuity of all relationships in young people's lives in order to maintain their identity.

Young people are encouraged to acquire practical skills around the home such as keeping their rooms tidy, helping with the cooking and generally looking after the environment.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people benefit from a staff group who provide consistent care with suitable ratios of staff in place. They know that staff are always concerned with their welfare because staff convey this clearly and carefully by creating a home that promotes complete acceptance of the young person in spite of any challenges they present. Staff listen to young people and provide manageable incentives, good daily routines and a high level of nurture. They are able to adapt their care to suit young people's individual needs and are not fazed by periods of very negative behaviours. For example, they are currently addressing some very challenging behaviours linked to differing transitions and in particular barriers to progress with school. They are doing this through a short-term period of home tutoring, followed by staff taking the young person to individual lessons in the afternoon. As a result of such good quality care, young people are engaging with staff and are coping with daily living. An independent reviewing officer said, 'I am really impressed how young people have made such positive progressive developments since they arrived.'

Young people demonstrate an understanding of how they can make a complaint. Appropriate information about the complaints procedure and young people's rights is readily available. This promotes young people's rights and assists them to develop an understanding of formal procedures. Young people are confident with sharing their views. They use their time with their keyworker to talk through any changes they wish to make or any areas of difficulty. This ensures that the voice of young people remains at the heart of the work of the home.

Young people routinely enjoy a good range of activities, and again dedicated staff time enables them to access some good opportunities such as going to the cinema, going swimming and dancing. Young people's cultural background and personal identity are positively addressed in both daily living and care planning and their rights are respected and promoted.

The staff are particularly good at facilitating some very complicated contact between young people and their families, even when their relationships have had some difficulties in the past. The staff facilitate all contact arrangements to suit the needs of all involved.

The Registered Manager pays particular attention to planning and coordinating young people's support to ensure that positive progress is achieved. Risks are

assessed regularly and reflected in written information that staff use to guide the way they work each day. Consequently, staff are able to adapt and change the way they work quickly to ensure risks are managed effectively.

The home is located in a small village and is well decorated and very homely. Young people have their own rooms which they personalise.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people are safe at this children's home, and their attitude towards staff indicate that they feel safe and secure. Young people are well protected from bullying, accidents, going missing, or other forms of harm because the staffing ratios are appropriate, and thorough risk assessments identify clear ways of preventing potential incidents which may put young people at risk. One professional said, 'A highly professional manner when dealing with incidents.'

Young people rarely go missing. However the home does need to ensure it has the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols in place and there is a strong and proactive relationship with the police.

Young people understand the rules of the home and they feel that the staff are very fair and reasonable when it comes to helping them with their behaviour. There have been some appropriate consequences and physical intervention has been used on a number of occasions, all of which have been appropriate and as a last resort. Such incidents are well recorded in the required format, with good managerial oversight.

Staff demonstrate a very good knowledge of safeguarding procedures and are very clear that the safety of young people is their paramount consideration, showing due regard to the particular vulnerabilities of the young people they support. They have ready access to written procedures and take part in relevant and regular safeguarding training. Regular monitoring further protects young people, as staff practice is regularly overseen by the manager.

Young people benefit from the home being physically safe and secure. The environment is maintained well and regular safety checks ensure that equipment and utilities work safely. Fire prevention equipment is in place and serviced according to professional guidance. Internal fire drills and fire equipment checks are regularly undertaken to ensure everyone can respond appropriately in an emergency. Recruitment has been robust in the past and all recruitment is organised through head office in partnership with the registered managers. It was not fully inspected on this occasion.

### **Leadership and management**

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

Young people benefit from a consistent, effective manager who spends some time directly with them and also ensures that staff are well supported in their work. She is registered to lead both this and another smaller home nearby. The home is operated and managed in the best interests of each young person in placement.

Competent and knowledgeable staff are committed to promoting good outcomes for young people in their care. The staff are managed in a way that encourages regular reflection of their work, which in turn helps identify ways of improving the service. The staff attend regular staff meetings and receive one-to-one supervision and appraisals. There is a positive commitment to professional development, with staff regularly updating their core training to refresh their knowledge and understanding. This ensures they possess the competences and skills to meet young people's diverse needs. Staffing levels are managed in keeping with the service's statement of purpose and the needs of the young people.

The home's quality assurance programme is good. Monitoring, both internal and external, is rigorous and effective in driving improvements. The manager undertakes the quality assurance and these have provided a good analysis of the current systems and are fed into the six monthly report to Ofsted. Consultation systems have not yet been developed to include formal consultation with young people, parents, and stakeholders. Likewise there is a development plan in place but would benefit from it being more of a working document providing clearer aims and objectives indicating when these have been achieved.

Social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and other professional say that there is good communication from staff and the manager and that any agreed actions are promptly dealt with by the home. This adds to the good quality of care that young people receive and the positive outcomes that they experience.

## 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.