

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC379357
Inspection date	9 March 2010
Inspector	Jane Rushby
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	31 July 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home accommodates up to three young people aged eight to under 18 years. The home is owned by a large child care provider. The home provides care with education for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Each young person has their own bedroom. The home is situated in a rural area close to a large town and city. There are local shops and public transport within walking distance of the home. The home is an extended farmhouse with four bedrooms, a lounge, a games room and a kitchen/diner as well as an office. Outside there is a classroom, a large garden with a lawn area for activities and a fenced natural pond.

Summary

At this unannounced interim inspection, all key standards in staying safe were inspected. The other outcomes had all been judged as satisfactory at the previous key inspection in July 2009. This is a satisfactory service. Young people feel safe and cared for at the home and recognise they are being supported to make positive changes to their behaviour. There is one action and one recommendation arising from this inspection. Three young people currently live at the home, all were present and participated in the inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person was asked to address a number of shortfalls following the previous visit. The actions and recommendations have been carried out and have been commented on under staying safe, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is confidentially handled. Young people's records are securely stored in the office. A young person said 'we get enough privacy, staff knock on the door, if we don't answer they come to check if we are OK. Where room searches are carried out young people are involved as appropriate given the particular circumstances.

Young people feel that complaints will be responded to effectively and that they will be kept informed. One said 'we know how to complain, we can talk to staff'. There have been three complaints received since the previous visit which have been investigated and the complainants informed of the outcome. Young people have positive relationships with staff at this home and feel listened to. Previous concerns raised by neighbours about anti-social behaviour have been addressed through liaison with local police and the parish council.

Young people feel safe in the home and that staff are protective and caring. Young people did not feel bullying behaviour was happening at the home, however, staff have a good understanding of the relationships between individuals and clear strategies are in place to protect young people from bullying. A young person said 'we mess around, but we don't take

it personally - we don't bring up families'. New staff are trained in safeguarding procedures during induction and staff know how to respond appropriately to allegations or disclosures of abuse. Young people who may go missing are protected by clear protocols and effective liaison with local police.

Young people benefit from clear and consistent expectations of behaviour. An action arising from the previous visit; that the responsible person ensures that measures of control and disciplinary measures are based on establishing positive relationships with children which are designed to help the child, has been carried out in full. Young people acknowledge improvements in their behaviour which have happened during their stay at this home. One said 'rules here are very fair, staff tell us off and I'm trying to improve. I've never been restrained here'. Staff work hard to deflect young people away from negative behaviours without using physical intervention. A young person said 'I wasn't restrained because they dealt with it in a different way'. Physical interventions are used as a last resort. Where these take place they are recorded thoroughly and cross reference accurately with other documentation, however, the logs recording restraints do not contain the views of the young person. There are reasonable sanctions in place, which are used appropriately.

Young people are protected by sound health and safety procedures which are monitored regularly through the Regulation 33 and 34 processes. Young people are familiar with evacuation procedures. A risk assessment process is in place for individual young people and specific activities and staff are aware of the risks arising from the needs and behaviour of the young people. Risk assessments are monitored and updated regularly.

Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people. It was not possible to make a judgement about staff recruitment processes as the files were not available in the home. This will be checked at the next inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

At the previous inspection the registered person was asked to ensure that both the needs of the child concerned, and the likely effects of his or her admission upon the existing group of residents, are taken into account and recorded, in decisions on admissions to the home. This has been carried out in full. A thorough risk assessment and placement matching document is completed in respect of new admissions, and where a high risk is assessed the placement does not go ahead. The group of young people currently living in the home are happy with their peers. One said 'I feel comfortable here, I get on with the lads'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

At the previous visit the registered person was asked to ensure that all parts of the children's home used by children are suitably furnished and reasonably decorated. This recommendation has been carried out. The home is well maintained, clean, warm and appropriately decorated and furnished.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

At the previous visit the registered person was asked to employ sufficient staff for the running of the home taking into account the needs and behaviour of the children and young people. This was in relation to the shortfall in staff numbers. This action has been carried out. Extensive steps have been taken to recruit new staff. The home is fully staffed with a fairly new staff team. No agency workers have been used for some time. The manager and staff from other homes in the company cover shifts if required. The manager is in the process of applying to be registered under the suitable person process. There is a shortfall in that not all staff given responsibility for leading shifts have substantial relevant experience of working in the home or have completed their probationary periods. Outcomes for young people have not been affected adversely by this arrangement but it is a breach of the standards and regulations.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
29	ensure that there is at all times a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons working at the children's home. In particular that staff who are responsible for leading shifts have substantial relevant experience of working in the home and have successfully completed their probationary period. (Regulation 25)	30 April 2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that when restraint is used children are encouraged to write or have their views recorded and sign their names against them in the records kept by the home (national minimum standard 22.14)