

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC381339
Inspection date	25/04/2013
Inspector	Louise Redfern
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	14/02/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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

The home provides care and accommodation for up to six young people of either gender, with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home is operated by a private organisation.

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**.

Young people are settled in their placements; they build trusting relationships with staff and as a result, feel they are well cared for and are safe in and around the home. In relation to their individual starting points, young people are making good progress. They develop strong community links in the local area, while maintaining a clear attachment to their family and community.

Young people live in a supportive environment that is underpinned with clear and consistent boundaries. Individual needs are well identified with updated plans and strategies in place to address them. There is a strong commitment to ensuring young people develop life skills in preparation for living independently.

Young people benefit from a committed Registered Manager who regularly monitors the home and has a development plan in place. Requirements and recommendations have been raised to ensure improvements are made in respect of recording, educational achievement and the consultation process with young people and supporting agencies.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, a written record is made including the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure (Regulation 17B (3)(f))	23/05/2013
18 (2001)	promote the educational achievement of all children accommodated in the home, including regular attendance at school and participation in school activities of children of compulsory school age or regular attendance at college where applicable (Regulation 18 (b))	23/05/2013
34 (2001)	ensure that the system for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with children, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34(3))	23/05/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the result of all statutory reviews are recorded on the child's file. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people benefit from good levels of contact with family members and individuals who are important to them. Young people comment that their family and friends are welcome at the home. This means that support networks are maintained in preparation for them living independently from the home. One parent commented, 'I always feel welcomed when I visit my son at the home.'

Young people actively participate in day-to-day decision making about their care, through young people's meetings and one-to-one direct work sessions. They are making progress in the home because of consistent support and care from the whole staff team. As a result, they are forming and sustaining positive attachments with staff and make progress in developing emotional resilience. One young person commented, 'I know the staff are really proud of me and I am proud of myself especially looking at how mature I have become since living here.'

Young people are making good progress, in relation to their individual starting points, in developing their independence skills in preparation for adulthood. As a result, young people are empowered and encouraged to develop skills for life in readiness for living independently. One young person commented, 'I am doing really

well on my independence programme, I am getting really good at budgeting.'

Young people's physical and emotional health is good. They receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. Young people benefit from attending routine health appointments to support their emotional well-being and maintain their general health.

Some young people have good attendance at school and college and, given their individual starting points, these are significant achievements. However, a minority of young people do not benefit from regular attendance at education and, as a result, their levels of attainment are low. Staff offer young people daily support and encouragement to attend school and continue to explain the importance of a good education. Success and achievements in education are celebrated, which provides encouragement for them to continue attending and achieving in education.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff. This is because staff are consistently concerned with young people's welfare. One young person commented: 'the staff talk to me about stuff and I feel that they really listen to me. When I first came here, they didn't judge me on what other people had written about me. It was like a fresh start.'

Young people know how to make a complaint; they are provided with information about how to do this upon admission to the home and information is available around the home. There are good records of complaints made and their outcomes. Young people also benefit from regular visits from the children's rights officer, who is able to offer independent advice and advocacy for young people living in the home.

Individual placement plans are sufficiently detailed and include individual needs relating to young people's personal identity. Detailed care planning and proactive relationships with partner agencies contribute to the quality of care received by young people. However, young people do not always record their views on these plans which are a missed opportunity to explore their views on the running of the home and issues directly related to them.

Statutory review minutes are not consistently made available by the placing authority for young people and staff. Requests are made for the relevant documents from social workers. To ensure that the home supports young people to progress against approved plans and actions, staff record their own notes of the meetings. This means that staff act promptly on all decisions made. Pathway plans, where appropriate, have been completed with partner agencies, to further promote young people's skills and competence for adulthood.

Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles; they engage in positive activities such as using the local gym and going swimming. This encourages them to engage in positive

social interaction in the community. Young people have access to a range of health promotion information in the home and access to support from other agencies, such as drug and alcohol project workers. They benefit from attending regular health appointments. Where young people have previously been reluctant to attend specific appointments, the home has worked in partnership with external agencies to develop a clear strategy to encourage them to attend appointments.

Young people benefit from a home that is clean and well maintained. Communal areas continue to be well used and are respected by young people. They are encouraged to personalise their individual bedrooms. Since the last inspection, young people have had the option to re-decorate their bedrooms and choose new bedding and soft furnishings.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people report that they feel safe and can talk to an adult when they are concerned. A young person commented, 'it's definitely a safe place to live.' There are no incidents of bullying in the home. Young people say: 'I have been bullied in another care home; bullying doesn't happen here, I know that the staff would stop it straight away'. Families and professionals agree that young people are protected in the home. One professional commented: 'the home is good at collating information and then sharing the concerns raised to safely support X in the home and community'.

Young people are encouraged to behave positively. When they do engage in negative behaviour, sanctions are imposed and they are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. However, the manager does not routinely comment on the effectiveness of the sanctions, in order to evaluate if the consequence remains appropriate. Staff are all trained in behaviour management and physical restraint techniques and consistently apply these in practice. As a result, physical restraint is rarely used.

On the occasions that young people go missing from the home, there are clear safeguarding procedures in place. Staff are clear how to respond to such incidents and work proactively to support young people in returning quickly and safely. The home has developed positive links with local police officers to support and promote the safety of young people in the home and the community. The Registered Manager ensures strategy meetings take place to identify and manage associated risks. The outcomes of these meetings are outlined clearly in young people's detailed individual risk assessments.

Young people live in a physically safer environment. Routine health and safety checks have become more robust. For example, routine bedroom checks are now in place to promote the health and safety of young people. Insurance certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

An experienced Registered Manager manages the home. The staff team is well balanced in terms of gender, age and experience. This provides young people with effective role models. The home is adequately resourced to meet the needs of the young people and good staffing levels are in place on each shift. Staff report that they receive regular training, which means that they are able to provide care and support for young people.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff. Any shortfalls in the rota are covered by permanent staff. This ensures a level of consistent care to meet the needs of the young people. Staff are supported to meet the needs of the young people through regular and robust supervisions, appraisals and team meetings. Team meetings focus on the individual needs of young people and ways to improve practice in the home. Staff comment that they like their job and feel well supported by the management team.

The responsible individual and a representative from the placing authority monitor the home on a monthly basis and report on any areas for development; this also includes monitoring the environment, including young people's bedrooms. Young people talk in private with these visitors. The Registered Manager undertakes regular monitoring of the quality of care. However, the current Regulation 34 monitoring system does not provide for regular consultation about the quality of care received, with young people, parents and placing authorities. This constitutes a missed opportunity to obtain suggestions for improvements to the service and drive forward the quality of care.

The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. Staff and placing authorities are all clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities the home provides. Young people are clear about what the home sets out to achieve and get a children's guide prior to admission, which informs them and their families about the service. Significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and appropriate action is taken to protect young people.

The Registered Manager has taken action to address the requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection. As a result, the outcomes for young people have significantly improved. They now live in a home that is a cleaner and safer environment. Effective monitoring of the improvements to the quality of care has resulted in higher standards being maintained. Young people have access to independent advice from appropriate adults, this means they feel empowered and supported to take decisions about their care. The Statement of Purpose is improved and the staff team now have clear procedures and better information to manage emergency admissions to the home. These effective actions demonstrate an on-going commitment to improving the provision.

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.