

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC393567
Inspection date	18 January 2010
Inspector	Roy Bega
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	19 June 2009
--------------------------------	--------------

© Crown copyright 2010

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.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

This home is operated and managed by a national organisation and provides accommodation for an associated residential special school.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged nine to sixteen years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is located in a rural area but close to community services.

A commitment to a therapeutic approach underpins the philosophy of care within a homely environment.

The home promotes social inclusion and aims to provide each young person the opportunity to develop their maximum potential through the delivery of an extended curriculum that is based on education and care.

Young people are afforded single bedrooms with proportionate communal space which includes a large kitchen diner and two other reception areas. One of the young people's rooms has the ability of being a self contained bed-sit to support preparation for independent living. The spacious garden is mainly laid to lawn with seating areas.

Summary

This is the home's initial unannounced full key inspection subsequent to registration in July 2009.

Two action points are raised resulting from this inspection visit.

Young people are actively encouraged in taking an interest in their personal health and healthy ways of living. The home provides appropriate age related information regarding health, safety and social issues.

The welfare of young people is effectively promoted within the home. Procedures in place ensure they are safeguarded from harm. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues and know how to implement the home's policy.

Management and staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. They ensure education is an integral part of life at the home and not just limited to school or college. Education continues outside of the formal classroom in areas of interest to the young people.

Good systems for reviewing young people's placement plans are in place. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in reviews, are assisted to put forward their thoughts and receive full information on the outcome.

Young people are fully involved in the planning and spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the home's initial inspection subsequent to registration in July 2009

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people are provided with wholesome and nutritious food in adequate quantities with regard to their culture, ethnic and religious backgrounds, dietary needs and choices. They have opportunity to participate in menu planning, shop and where appropriate assist in meal preparation. Meal times are viewed as social occasions.

The physical, emotional and health needs of each young person are identified and appropriate action is taken meet them. Young people are provided with guidance, advice and support on health and personal care issues appropriate to their age and cultural needs. Staff present as good role models for young people in supporting them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Young people are actively discouraged from unhealthy activities and given opportunities to discuss issues openly and honestly with staff and peers. The organisation's promotes a holistic approach in meeting young peoples needs through education, therapy and social care. There are also excellent working relationships with external specialist child care agencies.

Young people are actively encouraged to continue their preferred sporting activities and supported to experience new ones. For example canoeing, horse riding and rock climbing.

Robust medication policies and procedures are in place. All medication is suitably stored in locked cabinets and records well maintained.

Parental consent for emergency medical treatment, first aid and administration of medication is in place. Regular medication monitoring reviews are completed. Staff receive training in the administration of medication and first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is well respected by staff. Staff knock on doors before entering a young person's room. There is a policy in place with regards to searching a young person's room and a record is kept if this occurs. Any confidential information kept on the young people is securely stored in locked cabinets within the office.

The right of a young person to complain about their care in the home is made clear to them on their admission. The young person's handbook gives clear guidance to the young people about who they can complain to and their contact details. Weekly house meetings provide an open forum for young people to discuss any concerns. Staff receive training in the management of complaints as part of their induction process. Numbers of complaints dealt with by the manager are very low. There has been one from a neighbour which has been appropriately managed and none from the young people.

Young people are cared for by staff who receive appropriate training in child protection and safeguarding. Young people's vulnerability is clearly recorded within their looked after plans. Staff are aware of these and what they need to do in the event of any concerns about a young person's welfare. Procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required in order to safeguard young people and minimise the risk of abuse whilst young people are living in the home. Staff are very well informed of the setting's whistle blowing policy.

The organisation provides excellent procedural guidance for staff and information for young people regarding anti bullying. Management and staff are proactive in creating an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. During the visit staff de-escalated incidents of unrest amongst the young people in a cohesive and professional approach. There are also good links with the school in promoting a holistic approach towards anti bullying.

The home has a clear policy in place for the staff to follow in the event of a young person becoming missing. Each young person's care plan clearly records what course of action will be pursued should the young person leave the home without permission or not return to the home at the agreed time. This strategy is also explained to the young people so that they are clear as to what the consequences are if they are missing. The home works very closely with other agencies, including the police, to ensure they have an in-depth understanding of each young person's difficulties and vulnerabilities. Much work is carried out by staff to make young people aware of safety issues if they go missing.

Each young person has a behaviour management plan in place which outlines what support they need to achieve positive behaviour. Triggers for distressed or challenging behaviour are recorded in each young person's behaviour management plan. These plans include comprehensive and complex behavioural management strategies. All members of staff receive training in the method of positive handling used by the organisation. There are low numbers of recorded physical interventions despite the high level of behaviour difficulties presented by young people. Sanctions and use of physical interventions are appropriately recorded and monitored by the manager. An incentive scheme is promoted by staff and works well for young people with good outcomes seen. Staff and young people are clear about behavioural boundaries, expectations and consequences of poor behaviour. The young people are portraying a marked growth in self confidence and maturity since moving into the home from the main school campus. Daily home and school record books provide a good system in maintaining communication between care and teaching staff.

The manager ensures that any risk assessments related to the premises, activities or young people are updated and reviewed regularly. The home has up to date checks carried out on electric and gas installations. All staff and young people are given fire safety instructions when they arrive. Fire drills are carried out within the required timescales and at different times of the day and night. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and a detailed record kept.

The organisation operates a robust recruitment process which ensures that all members of staff have the correct checks made on them before commencing work. All visitors are vetted, supervised as appropriate and asked to sign the visitor's book.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff provide a good level of support to young people in aiding them towards achieving agreed goals and reach their full potential. Discussions and observation show the young people are portraying a marked growth in self confidence and maturity since moving into the home from the main school campus. Good systems are in place to encourage young people to have a voice and provide them with confidence to raise issues about their present and future lives. Young people were observed to be at ease in the company of all the staff on duty and social interaction was both spontaneous and friendly.

Young people benefit from an integrated approach between the home and main education campus. Each young person follows their agreed education statement which is reviewed annually. In partnership with specialist staff the home follows a holistic approach to education. Thorough extra curricular activities promotes social inclusion, relationships, building of self confidence and self esteem. The staffing structure ensures a co-ordinated approach to young people's personal, social, life skills and educational development. Where appropriate, young people are encouraged and supported to attend local further education colleges in the pursuit of specific interests and future employment. There are good informal and formal communication systems between the home and main education campus. This could be improved however by the installation of compatible computer software.

Staff actively encourage young people to participate in leisure activities at the main education campus, inside the home and within the wider community. Staff promote the introduction of new activities aimed at learning new skills and self confidence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's placement plans clearly identify how their needs are to be met. A structured review process continually assesses young people's needs throughout the placement to ensure positive outcomes are achievable. Regular reviews of care placement objectives occur where young people are encouraged to attend. Internal and where necessary specialist advice is sought to address particular issues young people may have and incorporated into their care and education plans.

Contact is fully promoted for young people and their families and friends. Any restrictions are for valid reasons that are fully understood by young people and staff. Young people are well supported to spend time at home in accordance with agreed plans and protocol. Good records are kept of each contact.

Young people are given a range of avenues to express how they feel. They have high levels of access to adults caring for them. There are regular key work sessions, house meetings, formal reviews and opportunities for young people to voice their views on an informal basis. The way the home functions enhances every young person's independence and opportunities to make every day choices in a safe way. The staff approach ensures that the young people feel valued and listened to.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home identifies with full participation of the young people and significant others, areas of skills and support that need developing as part of the pathway and leaving plan. Staff receive training in helping young people move towards independence.

The standard of the young people's clothing is very high enabling them to feel proud of their appearance among their friends and peer group. Young people are fully involved in planning the spending of the budget allocated to their personal clothing and toiletries. They are enabled to exercise choice in the clothes and personal requisites through normal shopping arrangements. Records of personal allowances paid to the young people are maintained to a high standard, but avoid an institutional approach.

The home provides a good standard of accommodation throughout. It is well lit, heated and ventilated. The home is decorated and furnished to a standard which creates a pleasant domestic environment. Young people show pride in their bedrooms by personalising them with possessions and posters. One young person's room that contains a cupboard housing the hot water tank can become too hot.

There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building. The organisation has its own maintenance team to ensure faults are rectified as soon as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Management and staff create an atmosphere and ethos where meeting individual needs is paramount. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are recruited fairly and without discrimination.

Management are continuing the process of reviewing the home's development and operational ethos. The setting provides suitable information regarding the facilities and services available for young people. The statement of purpose, raised in 2009 highlights all areas of care provision and identifies the aims and objectives of the service. The manager acknowledges however, the staffing section requires amending to include the names, number and qualifications of staff. Young people are given a children's guide that is comprehensive and clearly states what they can expect and what is expected of them.

Young people benefit from a good staff team with a mixture of experience and gender. They are all fully supported by the manager and other senior staff within the organisation. An extensive induction programme is offered to newly recruited staff with continued training after this period, including national vocational qualifications. Staff receive regular and a good standard of supervision and feel well supported. A good staff to young people ratio is in place to ensure high levels of support and individual attention. Staff attend regular team meetings to discuss the running of the home and the young people's behaviour and progress. All members of staff have clear job descriptions which outline their duties and responsibilities.

The home has regular visits undertaken by an external manager from within the organisation. These are the subject of reports which ensure that key areas in the home are monitored. They are also submitted to Ofsted on a monthly basis.

The management of the home and systems operated therein ensure that the staff are well trained and supported. All required records are accurate, up to date and clearly reflect the needs and progress of young people living at the home.

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
1	include in the Statement of Purpose all matters listed in Schedule 1; in particular paragraph 5 of that Schedule (Regulations 4 and 5)	28 February 2010
24	ensure the bedroom that contains a cupboard housing a hot water tank is appropriately ventilated to permit a more amiable temperature. (Regulation 31)	5 February 2010

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.