

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC397092
Inspection date	15 March 2010
Inspector	Dawn Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	1 July 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 is a rurally located children's home based in a large detached period property set on a country farm estate. The home looks after two young people who are assessed to benefit from the absence of distraction and the high staffing levels that this setting provides. The home has been totally renovated and refurbished to provide a spacious living environment. Although rurally located the home has easy vehicular access to the recreational amenities in some nearby towns and the company's educational provision.

Summary

This inspection is an announced full inspection. All the key national minimum standards have been inspected. In line with Ofsted guidance for the inspection of a newly registered children's home the outcome for the overall quality rating is satisfactory. The outcome groups relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation are assessed and judged as satisfactory.

Young people were involved in the inspection and stated 'this home is amazing, with the best manager and staff team'.

Young people receive well planned and regularly reviewed care that supports their needs. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and behaviour is well managed. Young people are safe and their welfare is promoted. Young people are provided with opportunities to develop skills and confidence and staff are proud of the young people's achievements.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable. This is the first inspection since registration.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The promotion of young people's health and arrangements for their medical needs is satisfactory. Young people feel that their health needs are met and that staff are caring when they are ill. Medical and health records are well documented and clearly show that young people's medical appointments are up to date and their health is closely monitored. Young people state that staff promote healthy diets and healthy lifestyles. This is supported by enjoyable homemade meals and lots of physical exercise and activities.

Staff have a good awareness of health issues and have received training in first aid and food hygiene. Staff liaise effectively with health professionals, which ensures additional support to young people. Staff also have daily contact with the educational provision where young people attend structured lessons on health education, which enhances work undertaken by the home in key worker sessions.

Young people enjoy the food that is prepared and like helping to cook. All menus are planned by young people with the supervision of staff. They are healthy, nutritious and culturally diverse and include choice. Young people are able to take responsibility for shopping and cooking their own meals. They are also encouraged to develop an understanding of budgeting as well as healthy eating, which also promotes their independence and life skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young peoples safety is promoted because staff listen and take appropriate actions to ensure their welfare.

Staff are trained in safeguarding children procedures and have access to a range of effective procedures that promote the rights and welfare of young people. High staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all young people are kept safe and receive appropriate support. There are good risk assessments and management strategies in place.

Young people state that their privacy and confidentiality is respected by staff who model appropriate sensitive practice. This is reflected in the home's policies, procedures and guidance to staff. Confidential information is appropriately stored.

Young people know how to complain and can name a range of people they are confident to speak to. The young people and staff feel because issues are raised quickly and are promptly addressed, they do not need to use the formal complaints procedure. There has been one formal complaint since the home opened.

Bullying is not identified as a problem at the home. There is an effective anti-bullying policy. Staff have a good understanding of group dynamics and demonstrate a commitment to supporting young people who exhibit challenging behaviour. The staff reinforce positive behaviour and this supports young people to develop self-esteem, self-belief and independence skills. Young people are encouraged and supported to behave in ways that will sustain them in the community once they have achieved independence. Staff are focused on providing behavioural boundaries that are fair and easily understood by young people. One young person described how staff were 'fair' and 'meet you half way'.

Young people who are absent from the home without permission are reported correctly to external agencies. Staff do their best to locate young people. Staff maintain open communication with the local police and clear records are maintained of all action taken to locate and find young people. Staff ensure that safe and well checks take place when young people return to the home.

Young people and staff express confidence in the safety and security of the home. They learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill and staff receive fire training. Tests on fire systems and other electrical equipment take place at appropriate intervals and environmental risk assessments are in place and are systematically reviewed to ensure that all potential hazards are identified and reduced.

Staff vetting processes are in place. The staff records were not examined during this inspection because they are stored at the company headquarters.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's needs are assessed on an individual basis and appropriate support is afforded to each young person. Staff have a good awareness about diversity and the needs of young people. Key workers show a good level of commitment and coordinate support for young people, provide individual key working sessions and liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised individual needs.

Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for young people. The staff provide a clear and enthusiastic commitment to supporting and encouraging young people to enjoy and achieve in both education, leisure activities and overall personal development. Staff provide a clear commitment and flexible approach to exploring ways to best motivate young people. When young people are struggling to sustain attendance and engagement with their education staff work with teachers to try and improve the situation.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are looked after by staff who show a good awareness of their needs which are recorded with practical day-to-day care strategies in good quality placement care plans.

Staff place value on the views and opinions of the young people, however, this practice is not evidenced in written records. Young people confirm they are encouraged to read and sign their placement care plans and other key documents and discuss their needs, views and wishes. The outcomes of these discussions are not being routinely recorded either in key worker sessions or in daily records or logs. Young people are also given the opportunity to attend meetings, including statutory reviews with their social worker. However, review reports and minutes from reviews are not present on young people's files.

Relationships and contact with parents, family and friends is actively promoted by staff. Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with families and friends are well recorded and supported by the manager and staff at the home.

Young people are encouraged to contribute to the running of the home and their placements by attending young people's meetings, key working sessions and spending quality time with staff. Young people say they get on well with their key workers and feel supported by the staff.

Young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner that makes the young person feel comfortable, welcome and well informed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Opportunities to help young people develop life skills and prepare for more independent living are well supported by the staff. Although young people living at the home are not currently involved in specific programmes, there are plans for these to soon be implemented. Young people are encouraged to develop confidence and skills that will contribute to their future economic wellbeing. Staff are keen to encourage young people to engage in opportunities that

will enable them to progress in their achievements, develop skills, build confidence and facilitate a meaningful transition into young adulthood.

Young people do not have pathway plans on file. This means that the home is not able to work in partnership with the placing authority in addressing the matters set out under standard 6.2.

Young people are proud of their home and the facilities available to them. They live in a well maintained and comfortable environment, that they feel is 'cosy' and 'welcoming'. The lounge, games room, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms are well furnished, well decorated and present a homely environment. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and feel that their space is respected by staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The home is well managed and this is having a positive impact on the outcomes for young people. The home has an up to date Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide. Staff are aware of the principles and aims of the home and are positive and enthusiastic about their work.

Young people benefit from a stable staff group that are sufficient in numbers to meet their individual needs. The Registered Manager manages the home effectively and efficiently. The rota shows effective levels of staffing and provides time for daily handover meetings, regular team meetings and staff supervision.

Good emphasis is given to staff training and development, which is focused on areas relating to young people's needs. There is a clear induction process, staff supervision is regular and core training is available to and completed by all staff. A key strength of this professional staff team is the high levels of qualifications held, all staff have NVQ level 3 at least.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Discussions with staff show they are open to the different needs, experiences and backgrounds of young people. The staff team provide a clear commitment and backdrop of care to meet the needs of the young people currently living at the home.

Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well organised and shows a clear record of each young person's progress.

The home's monitoring processes include regulation 33 visits. The manager monitors the running of the home, including checks on records, maintaining staff supervision and responding to regulation 33 reports.

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 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure the results of all statutory reviews and reviews of placement plans are recorded on the child's file, and the individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from reviews are clearly identified (NMS 3.4)
- ensure key worker sessions and young people's significant views, discussions and expressed opinions are recorded promptly (NMS 2.2, 2.5, 8.3).
- ensure pathway plans are in place for young people, where appropriate. (NMS 6.2).