

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC398253
Inspection date	13/12/2010
Inspector	Anne Bannister
Type of inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	10/05/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© 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 Crispins, 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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 five bedded children's home is one of three run by the company. The home is in a small village with education being provided in a purpose-built school on the company's main site. It is a detached house with its own grounds. All young people have single en-suite bedrooms. The quality of the accommodation provided is of a high standard. Young people enjoy homely accommodation which is well furnished and decorated. The home has access to a range of local facilities in a nearby city and villages. It is registered for five males, aged from 12 years old up to 17 years old with emotional and behavioural problems. Five young people were living at the home at the time of the inspection. Young people and staff were actively involved in this process.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This is an unannounced interim inspection. The purpose of the inspection is to assess the key national minimum standards in the outcome area of staying safe and to check progress made on three actions and 10 recommendations set at the key inspection to the home on 10 May 2010. Since the key inspection the Registered Manager has been on a period of extended sick leave. There have also been significant changes in the staffing of the home and in the resident group. The staff team have been supported by the director of care. Weaknesses continue to relate to the manner in which staff evidence the work they are undertaking with young people.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three actions and nine recommendations were made following the key inspection in May 2010. All actions have or are being addressed. The school nurse and the Registered Manager both monitor health plans each month and additional information is being sought from some placing authorities. The use of wedges to prop open fire doors has ceased. The director of care has directed that copies of looked after children's review minutes are to be forwarded to the home when they are received at the main site and placed on young people's files.

The prolonged absence of the Registered Manager due to illness has resulted in only some recommendations being addressed. Others are in the process of being actioned and one is outstanding.

Menus now adequately reflect the full range of fresh meat and vegetables that encourage young people to eat a healthy and nutritious diet. The company's quality

monitoring practices have become more robust. Staff have received written guidance to ensure adequate records are maintained when a complaint is made about one part of the service by another. Review minutes are now placed on young people's files when they are received from the placing authority as well as being kept at the company's head office at Kirkby Moor School. There is some evidence that the revised format of placement planning being implemented will ensure that the placement plan for each child sets out clearly the assessed needs of the child, the objectives of the placement, how these will be met by the registered person on a day to day basis, the contribution to be made by the staff of the home, and how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed in relation to each major element of the plan. This recommendation has been restated and will be fully assessed at the next full inspection. The revision of placement plans is ongoing and will be followed up at the next full inspection. Discussion of behaviour management techniques that are being used to promote positive behaviours by young people are raised at team meetings. However, the content of the minutes to evidence this discussions is not consistent.

Staff are yet to be provided with training in the promotion of equality and diversity and this recommendation has been restated.

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.

Overall the arrangements in place to promote the welfare and safety of young people are satisfactory. The staff team are committed to ensuring that young people in their care are protected from harm.

Suitable policies on privacy and confidentiality are in place. Staff spoken to are aware of the need to show respect for young people's rights to privacy and are fully aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality. There have been four instances when it has been necessary to search young people's rooms. Reasons why the search is necessary are clearly documented and young people are made aware of why staff are taking these actions.

There has been one safeguarding referral since the previous inspection. The timescales for reporting of this event did not comply with local safeguarding procedures and the Ofsted protocol for reporting significant incidents. This was a direct result of inaccurate instructions being given to staff by the responsible individual. The designated person for safeguarding has since ensured that staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities to make a prompt referral under safeguarding guidelines.

Staff take concerns and complaints raised by young people seriously. Young people spoken to confirm that they are aware of the various ways they can raise a concern or complaint. They feel that staff do respond to issues they raise with them, which are usually sorted out informally. There have been two complaints since the last inspection. One relates to a concern about noise raised by a neighbour. This is being dealt with by the senior management team. The other is being dealt with under local safeguarding procedures.

There are systems in place to ensure young people are protected from bullying if it should occur. However, incidents which have been logged fail to indicate whether staff had shared their concerns with the educational provision the young people attend. As a consequence it is not clear that young people's complaints about bullying have been adequately addressed.

Staff base their management of behaviour on encouraging acceptable behaviour. Staff are trained in behaviour management, and use their skills in de-escalation to try to respond to negative behaviours shown by young people. Despite this there has been an increase in the numbers of physical interventions since the previous inspection. This directly links to the number of new admissions which have occurred and the problems they experience in making the transition from one establishment to another. Staff and young people are given the opportunity to reflect back on any incident to determine how to try to ensure that future need for physical intervention to be used is lessened. Behaviour management plans and risk assessments are agreed as part of placement planning arrangements. Staff confirm that discussions take place, both in team meetings and at the end of each shift, to ensure they are responding consistently to young people's behaviours. However, documentation in staff meetings minutes and in assessing the impact of sanctions in promoting positive behaviours is not well developed.

The home has written procedures identifying action to be taken when a young person goes absent without authority. Such instances rarely occur. There are protocols in place with the local police ensure that young people's welfare is promoted when such behaviours do happen.

There are weaknesses in the systems in place to ensure the organisation makes notifications of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. This has resulted in the home failing to notify under safeguarding procedures within a 24-hour timescale. There has also been a failure to notify Ofsted of all police involvement at the home.

Evidence and observation shows that the home has a responsible attitude towards health and safety matters. The home has risk assessments in place for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds. Appropriate risk assessments relating to young people's behaviours and planned activities are in place. These risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure young people's continued safety.

The organisation has in place procedures, relating to the selection and vetting of all staff working at the home prior to employment, that meets the requirements of standard 27 of the children's home national minimum standards. However, the central record maintained has been revised and no longer includes the start and termination date of the employment of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is not judged.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
20	ensure, in relation to a children's home, if any of the events listed in column 1 of the table of Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 30(1))	31/01/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to notify within 24-hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. This is to ensure staff have adequate guidance regarding their responsibility when a young person makes an allegation to them about the service provided in another part of the organisation's registered facilities (NMS 20.1).
- ensure staff meetings address issues of control and agree practicable and acceptable means of responding to behaviour and control problems of both the current group of children and of individual children in light of their histories, any current problems and placement plans (NMS 22.16)
- ensure children who are bullied, and children who may bully others are given suitable guidance. In particular this relates to the need to ensure that when issues of bullying are occurring in the home this information is passed onto education. (NMS 18.4)
- ensure that there is evidence at the home to confirm that staff members and others subject to the above checks do not normally start work at the home until all the checks required in the Children's Home Regulations 2001 are completed. In particular this relates to the need to ensure that the central record includes the date staff commence employment (NMS 27.5)
- ensure that the placement plan for each child sets out clearly the assessed needs of the child, the objectives of the placement, how these will be met by the registered person on a day to day basis, the contribution to be made by the staff of the home, and how the effectiveness of the placement is to be assessed in relation to each major element of the plan (NMS 2.1)
- provide staff with training in the promotion of equality and diversity. (NMS 31)