

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC398391
Inspection date	21/06/2011
Inspector	Trevor Hall
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	19/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

This is a small children's home which is part of a privately owned care company. The home offers care and accommodation to three young people aged between nine and 17 years of age.

The home provides care and accommodation to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is a large detached property providing each young person with their own individual bedroom. The home has a main lounge, a smaller lounge, large kitchen and separate dining area. The home has a large enclosed garden and ample off road car parking.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The supportive environment that this home provides enables young people to make good progress. Detailed care planning supported by good staff involvement ensures that young people receive the individual care they need. Young people are encouraged to take an active role in their own care and generally enjoy living at the home. The home is good in ensuring that young people are not only kept safe, but also develop the knowledge and confidence to keep themselves safe. Good liaison with external agencies ensures that young people receive good levels of support in all aspects of their lives. Good links have been developed between the home and the educational establishments attended by young people. Young people are taught to respect others and to strive to fulfil their individual potential both in their educational and their personal development. Young people are given opportunities to experience new activities and learn new skills and are encouraged to challenge previously held attitudes, this enables them to grow as individuals and develop their self-esteem.

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in this home and uses feedback from young people, external professionals and senior colleagues through their quality assurance procedures to shape the home's future development. Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. This is actively recognised by the young people who consider the home to be a good one that keeps them safe and meets their needs.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people receive a good level of care based on their individual assessed needs which takes into account their age, gender, religion, culture and levels of ability. Young people benefit from regular education, contact with parents or significant others and encouragement to develop their independent skills. As a result, they make good progress which is clearly evidenced in their care records. Young people are actively encouraged to make everyday choices and take control of their lives wherever possible.

Young people have good opportunities to make good progress in their education. Personal educational plans include realistic targets which young people understand and can meet. Young people are supported and actively encouraged by staff to re-engage in education where young people have been out of education for some time. As a result, young people enjoy good attendance at educational provisions which enables them to make progress and improve their levels of qualifications. Staff work closely with educational establishments to ensure young people are able to learn, improve on their achievements and increase their self-confidence and skills.

Staff support young people to maintain contact with family and friends and help with transport as necessary. Young people said they have quality time with family and friends and like the fact they are able to spend time outside of the home with important people in their lives.

Young people's well-being is at the heart of everything the staff do, irrespective of the challenges and barriers they face. Staff work hard to help make a difference in a young person's life by celebrating their achievements, however, small. This is done irrespective of ethnicity, faith, gender or sexual orientation. Young people are well cared for in line with their individual placement plan. The home is good at involving young people in helping to develop their care.

Young people live in a homely environment which meets their needs and enables them to develop different skills and enjoy the facilities of the home. They enjoy accommodation which is decorated and furnished to a good standard. The home is safe and secure as a result of the effective management of health and safety. Young people are supported to increase their independence skills in preparation for adulthood. For example, when appropriate, young people are given a food budget to manage which enables them to plan, buy food and prepare their meals.

Quality of care

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

Young people clearly benefit from a competent and very able staff team who genuinely care about the young people in the home. Young people build positive relationships with staff and engage in meaningful conversations with them. These positive relationships enable young people to feel safe in their care and help them to improve self-image and build up their emotional resilience.

Encouraging young people's educational and personal development is recognised as being central to the life of the home. Education attendance is good and high attainment is encouraged. Young people are encouraged to value their education and their progress is recognised and celebrated, as such, they are enabled to grow as individuals. Staff support young people to develop their knowledge, skills and independence by offering appropriate advice, encouragement and good role modelling.

Young people said they understand the complaints procedure although rarely need to use it. There is information about complaints written in a style suitable for young people to access within the guide to the home. Young people confirm they were given this and had it explained to them when they first arrived.

Young people resident in the home are encouraged to make a positive contribution to their placement and the running of the home. Young people confirm that they are involved in all aspects of their care and that they are given every opportunity to contribute to their own care planning arrangements. Staff actively seek their views at both an individual and group level and respond in a way that makes the young people believe that their opinions are valued. The home actively promotes a culture which recognises and respects young people's rights. Young people speak positively about how staff support them and how this makes them feel valued and respected.

Young people live in a home that is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Although the home is rural in its location the company have more than compensated for this with the excellent level of transport provision. This means that young people have convenient transport for activities, shopping and home visits. Young people have their own bedrooms, which they are encouraged to personalise. Their bedrooms reflect their interests and contain meaningful posters and significant personal items.

The atmosphere within the home is normally very relaxed and young people confirm that they enjoy living here. Young people acknowledged that the rural setting has been a positive advantage in enabling them to feel safe and protected.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe, valued and respected at this home. Risk assessments are in place for each individual young person, the premises and activities. These clearly identify the potential risk and effective strategies are in place to minimise these risks. There are a range of detailed policies and procedures including safeguarding; anti-bullying; complaints and behaviour management. These policies are understood by staff and effectively implemented. Staff's ability to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse is further promoted by the provision of a range of training. This includes child protection, behaviour management and health and safety training. Furthermore, the regular and effective monitoring of records and practices ensure young people receive safe care in line with their individual needs. High staffing levels further help to keep young people safe and reduce the risk of harm.

Young people's behaviour management plans are focused on the individual and give clear guidance to staff about managing anti-social behaviours. Staff work hard and in consultation with other relevant professionals to enable young people to change and improve behaviours. The emphasis is on recognising and rewarding positive behaviours and enabling young people to develop socially acceptable behaviours in preparation for adulthood and being part of the wider community.

The use of sanctions is fair and realistic. Young people understand the boundaries in place to ensure they are safe and well. Young people are asked to sign all records relating to the use of sanctions. Physical intervention by staff is only used as a last resort and records are kept as required.

The staff are very clear about their responsibility to protect young people. The staff promote a culture that ensures young people are listened to and respected as individuals. The process for dealing with complaints is fair and transparent.

There are clear procedures to follow based on individual needs and risks, in the event of a young person going missing. Staff implement procedures effectively which helps to protect young people from the risk of harm. The home has a copy of the local 'Missing from Care' protocol and staff work closely with the local police.

The management of health and safety at the home is good and helps to protect young people from the risk of harm and injury. This can be attributed to the effective implementation of clear health and safety policies and procedures; staff training; regular servicing and maintenance of equipment; detailed risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and robust and effective monitoring systems. Staff receive fire safety training and the fire evacuation procedure is explained to new staff on induction and young people on admission. Regular checks of the fire alarm system and fire drills are carried out.

Safe, robust and effective recruitment practices and the vetting of visitors help to protect young people from the risk of harm and abuse. Appropriate checks are carried out including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, proof of identity and obtaining appropriate references. Young people are also encouraged to be involved in the recruitment of staff as much as possible, which gives young people a voice and makes them feel valued.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose and a young person's guide which both help to inform young people, their families and placing authorities about the services provided by the home. The Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the practice and registration conditions of this home and includes all information required by regulation.

Young people enjoy the benefits of living in a home that is effectively and efficiently managed. The registered manager provides good quality leadership which enables staff to effectively help young people overcome their issues and ensures that identified needs are consistently and appropriately addressed. This open and honest dialogue encourages young people to take the support they are offered and enables them to make real progress. Staff help young people to realise their potential and to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, particularly in respect of their awareness around personal safety.

Staff feel well supported by the management team and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff training and development is seen as important and staff receive a range of training which enables them to meet the diverse needs of young people. Staff feel that senior members of the team provide a high level of support and guidance when required. For example, professional development is regularly reviewed during supervision and appraisal meetings. A member of staff said 'I feel supported here, I'm given lots of advice'. There is a clear induction process for new staff. Staffing levels are based on the needs of the young people and are flexible to ensure staffing levels can be increased when necessary. Good relationships exist between young people and staff.

There is a clear system in place which staff implement to notify appropriate authorities of all significant events relating to the protection of young people living at the home. This helps to further promote young people's well-being and protect them from harm.

There are good internal quality assurance systems. This helps to ensure young people are receiving care and support based on their individual needs and that care is being provided in a safe manner. All staff are involved in the monitoring of some systems and practices such as health and safety checks which promotes shared ownership of responsibilities. Monthly Regulation 33 visits are carried out by a representative from the company and reports produced. Reports are sent to Ofsted as required. These visits complement the internal monitoring systems to ensure young people receive appropriate care based on individual's assessed needs.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.