

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC407169
Inspection date	09/01/2012
Inspector	Caroline Jones
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/01/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2012

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 private children's homes that provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people, their families and partner agencies are extremely complimentary about the home and comment: 'It's brilliant the best, I feel safe, he has come on leaps and bounds, staff invest in the young people.' Young people have excellent relationships with staff who are nurturing, dedicated and thoroughly understand young people's individual needs. All young people living at the home make very good progress in relation to their starting points and continue to develop their skills and confidence. Young people receive care that helps prepare them for adulthood. Further work is needed to ensure that they are competent for independent living in the future; in particular to strengthening young people's understanding of healthcare and entitlements to support.

Young people benefit from well-planned, individualised care and placement plans ensure that they are cared for consistently in line with their needs. Staff work together with partner agencies to ensure a robust network of support and protection to guide young people in achieving their potential. Young people are confident to raise their views and staff advocate for young people to ensure that they gain the advice and support they need. Championing young people's educational needs despite barriers is a key strength of the home. The Registered Manager places a strong emphasis on providing high standards of individualised child care practices and promotes continuous improvement. The recommendation and requirement from the last inspection have been fully implemented.

The Statement of Purpose guides the child-focused ethos of the home, but does not include all the relevant information about the running of the home. Staff have regular appraisals of their performance, although this process does not take into account the views of young people, which is essential during evaluation. Regulation 33 monitoring visits are undertaken. However, they do not provide sufficient detail about all the areas that should be reviewed. Sound systems and practices are in place to safeguard young people missing from home, but the records of these incidents are not always detailed enough to give a thorough account of the event. Additionally, care practices do not ensure that young people experience appropriate risks as part of growing up.

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
4 (2001)	ensure that the Statement of Purpose includes all information listed in Schedule 1. (Regulation 4 (1))	01/02/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that visits of the home carried out under Regulation 33 include relevant checks set out in regulations and guidance and checks of any disciplinary measures, use of restraint and records of missing person's reports (NMS 21.7)
- ensure that appraisals take into account the views of young people (NMS 19.6)
- ensure that young people are fully prepared for independence through understanding and taking responsibility for healthcare and entitlements for support (NMS 12.1)
- ensure that young people are encouraged to take appropriate risks as a normal part of growing up (NMS 4.4)
- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reason given for running away and action taken in light of those reasons. (NMS 5.10)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive individualised, child-centred care which helps them grow in confidence. They are supported to understand their background through meaningful contact with their families and individual direct work sessions. Staff promote young people's independence very well, although this requires further development to ensure young people gain skills in understanding and taking responsibility for healthcare and entitlements to support. Young people are involved in the daily running of the home and participate regularly in young people's meetings to contribute their views for change and improvement. These practices empower young people to have control over their own daily lives.

Staff are proactive in ensuring young people lead a healthy lifestyle. They take part

in regular physical activities including bicycle riding, walking, horse riding and outdoor play. Young people are registered with health practitioners, have access to trained therapists and undertake statutory medicals with the looked after children nurse. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on its administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and this contributes to the development of young people.

Staff have high expectations for young people and promote their development and achievement into adulthood. Young people have a very good record of attendance at school and college and they have made significant progress which is highlighted within school reports. Teachers comment that young people have made: 'remarkable progress in behaviour and attainment.' Staff forge excellent relationships with professionals and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure their rights are protected. Young people make positive contributions to their community through participating in voluntary work.

Young people have regular contact with their family and friends which ensures that they continue to build relationships with those significant to them. Moreover, contact benefits young people in understanding their background and identity. Staff are knowledgeable about the emotional impact of contact upon young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy warm, respectful and positive relationships with staff, which are the foundation for the very good standards of care received by young people. Staff are enthusiastic about their work and actively engage with young people to promote their development. Young people feel that they are listened to and that their views contribute to the running of the home. Young people said: 'I like all the staff, we have young people's meetings, go out on activities and talk.'

Good care planning and preparation contributes to the success achieved by young people. They are very well cared for and have individual plans to target their needs. Staff work directly with young people to develop their understanding of their background and vulnerabilities to encourage their ability to keep themselves safe. Young people understand what to do if they are unhappy about something and choose to raise any dissatisfaction in the regular young people's meetings.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in activities, including drumming lessons visits to farms and museums, have regular holidays and have personal time with staff to discuss individual issues. Young people have access to health care services to meet their needs in all areas of their development. They are involved in the day-to-day running of the home, menu planning, shopping and cleaning which promotes independence, ownership and responsibility.

Staff champion young people's educational needs with school and college to ensure these needs are fully met. Despite challenges young people attend education provision regularly and make significant progress. Staff emphasise the value of education and provide learning experiences to complement young people's learning; for example trips to museums, drumming lessons and direct work around discrimination and society. These practices help young people learn and achieve their potential.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends well into the residential area. A warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere was observed throughout the inspection. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests. They have space and privacy to see their family and friends and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good arrangements in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Young people feel safe and staff work with them individually to address any vulnerabilities and risks. Staff are protective of young people which is commendable. However, this can lead to young people not taking appropriate risks as part of growing up. For example, young people returning home earlier than normal in the evening. Placement plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessment reports all provide a sound mechanism for responding to young people's changing needs for safety and protection.

Nurturing and respectful relationships between staff and young people provide the basis for managing behaviour. Staff use methods, such as consequences and incentives, to encourage young people's participation and assist them to accept responsibility for their actions. Young people comment: 'the rules are fair.' Staff receive appropriate training in order to safely manage physical intervention and are clear about its use as a last resort only. Where physical intervention has been used clear records detail the action taken, the duration and the support offered to young people afterwards. The transparency of this practice ensures young people are supported to express their feelings in a safe and caring environment.

The home has good arrangements in place with the missing from home coordinator, and staff work with external agencies to ensure a consistent approach is maintained should a young person go missing from home. This has contributed to the considerable reduction in young people going missing. Written records are available, but these are not always detailed enough to give a full account of the event.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home and record these. Safety and 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. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors' identity to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from an experienced, stable core staff team. A thorough recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any staff appointment is made. Additionally, any gaps in an applicant's employment history are explored within the recruitment process.. All staff have an induction, probationary period of work and appraisal to further ensure their competence in caring for young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. A clear vision of child-focused practice is prevalent within the home's culture. The Registered Manager works directly with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare, which ensures the very good standards of care and the safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides good leadership and accountability, and ensures staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them. The children's guide is accessible to young people. The Statement of Purpose, however does not include information about the organisational structure and clear arrangements for behaviour management.

There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care, including monthly visits by a designated person. Although monitoring is good and fully involves young people, not all the relevant areas are covered; for example visits do not routinely examine restraint and missing from home records. This has not impacted negatively upon young people's outcomes to date. The Registered Manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and has plans for development of the service to young people.

Staff confirm that they are very well supported and the organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. All existing staff have attained the required qualification and any new staff start work on gaining the qualification once they complete their period of probation. Regular quality supervision, team meetings and training opportunities all contribute to the competence of the staff in providing quality care to young people. Staff have their performance regularly and formally appraised. However, this does not take into account the views of young people. This means that valuable feedback to improve is not always captured.

The diversity of the staff team ensures a range of skills and qualities in meeting the individual needs of young people. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have high expectations for young people. Young people's records are good and provide a picture of young people's daily lives. Information about young people is securely stored and confidential to protect their safety and privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.