

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Jennifer Reed
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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 home is one of four children's homes operated by the organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people of either gender, aged from 10 to 17 years, with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The home provides a high intervention service which offers structured placements of nine months duration. Staffing levels are provided to meet the identified needs of accommodated young people. The home is situated in a rural area, with grounds and outbuildings covering five acres. The house offers single room accommodation for each young person.

Educational provision is arranged and overseen by the headteacher of the company's nearby school. Young people receive tuition in dedicated schoolrooms adjacent to the main house.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection which looked at the staying safe outcome for accommodated young people and the progress the home has made in addressing the actions and recommendations made at the previous inspection in September 2010. These related to improvements in the staffing of the home, the completion of documentation and the consideration of how young people can make choices and develop independence within the setting. Being healthy and economic well-being outcomes were judged as good at the last inspection and these standards were not looked at during this inspection.

The home continues to strive to provide an exemplary standard of care to each young person which helps them to make good progress and enjoy living in this setting. The home has been operational for six months and care practices are underpinned by the company's well established and proven policies, procedures and systems. The home is yet to establish and maintain a consistent and stable staff team; the home does not currently have a Registered Manager as this person has tendered their resignation from this post.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two action and five good practice recommendations were made at the previous inspection. These related to improvements in the staffing of the home, the completion of documentation and the consideration of how young people can make choices and develop independence within the setting.

The two actions relating to staffing matters have been satisfactorily implemented. Firstly, the home has ensured that a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons are employed at the children's home. Secondly, the registered person notified Ofsted of the appointment of a person to manage the children's home and this person was subsequently registered with Ofsted as the manager for the home in December 2010. However, since then, the Registered Manager has tendered their resignation from this post and is no longer operational within the home.

Four of the five good practice recommendations for improvement have been satisfactorily met by the home. The home has considered how its operation can enhance young people's independence and provide opportunities for them to make everyday choices. The senior management team has ensured that staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff have substantial relevant experience of working in the home, are not themselves temporary staff, and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods. Staff have received training in the completion of the home's documentation and report writing skills. The home continues to make arrangements for staff to study for and achieve the relevant awards in accredited childcare training qualifications.

The home was asked to make sure that any issues of concern identified by the regulatory monthly visitor during their inspection of the home were clearly included as recommendations or actions in the written report, to enable the registered person to take any necessary action for improvement. This matter has not been addressed and a further recommendation is made to action this shortfall.

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.

Young people's welfare is promoted and safeguarded by the home's policies, systems and records in place which address privacy, complaints, safeguarding and bullying issues, unauthorised absences, notifications, behaviour management and health and safety matters.

The home provides young people with sufficient privacy; young people can choose to lock their bedroom doors to ensure their privacy and suitable locks are fitted to bathroom doors. Alarms have been recently fitted to young people's bedroom doors to alert staff to any night-time movement within the house; this helps to safeguard young people and further protects their privacy. The home provides ample space for young people to meet with their families and visitors in private. All records are

securely stored within the home and young people's confidentiality is assured by the home's practice and systems in place.

Young people know how to make a complaint and any complaint is promptly dealt with by the home, ensuring that young people receive a quick response to matters of concern and they are kept informed about how the home is dealing with the matter.

The home's highly structured daily programme for young people provides them with a good understanding of expectations of behaviour and clearly defines boundaries. The programme and incentives used in the home encourage young people to make changes in their behaviour and young people respond well to the deserved praise they receive from staff in response to their achievements. Young people are making good progress. A number of restraints have been undertaken within the home to manage challenging behaviour and keep young people and staff safe. These measures of control are recorded in a dedicated book; however, the quality of recording is variable and some entries do not provide sufficient details to enable monitoring processes to effectively evaluate the appropriateness of such an action.

The home has been very successful in ensuring that young people are not absent without authority and they are kept safe. To date, there have been no occurrences of young people being missing from this home. The home promptly reports any serious incident to the relevant authorities and agencies and works closely with other services, sharing relevant information with them to ensure that young people are protected. Any bullying issues or friction between young people is rigorously monitored and effectively dealt with by the home, with staff identifying and implementing strategies to reduce the likelihood of discord. All new staff employed to work within the home have completed induction child protection, behaviour management and control and restraint training to raise their awareness and understanding of child protection issues. Longer term staff benefit from regular safeguarding training.

Young people's welfare is promoted by the home's comprehensive risk assessments for activities, premises and presenting behaviour, which are completed to assess the likelihood and the level of estimated risk to the health and safety of young people. Risk assessments are continually updated in response to arising issues. The company undertakes regular and very robust health and safety checks to ensure the suitability of the premises and the provision of a safe environment for young people and staff to live within. All of the required utilities checks have been completed and the home has public liability insurance. On admission, young people are given fire awareness instruction so that they know how to safely evacuate the building. However, there is not an established system in place to ensure that recently admitted young people benefit from taking part in a fire drill shortly after their arrival, to make sure that they understand what to do in an emergency.

The company has established robust recruitment and selection processes to ensure the effective vetting of new staff employed to work within the home. Agency workers benefit from undertaking core training provided by the company, prior to commencing any work within the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are making good progress and have a sense of their achievements; this helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Young people say they like living in this home and although they find the structured environment difficult at times, they appreciate how their placement is helping them to make positive changes in their lives.

Education is provided at the home in the classrooms adjacent to the main house. Young people benefit from having individual education plans and tailor-made educational provision to meet their assessed needs. Numeracy, literacy and personal, social and health education lessons are provided each school day; additional subjects, for example, woodwork, art and craft and fitness are included each week. The headteacher of the company's school provides oversight of the young people's work and progress and visits the site regularly to check on the standard of the education provision.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The home has considered how its operation can enhance young people's independence and provide opportunities for them to make everyday choices. Young people are expected to adhere to the home's structured daily living programme; however, they are able to make choices about their level of participation and staff help and support them to take responsibility for their decision making regarding their commitment to the programme. Young people are involved in menu planning and negotiate between themselves and with staff about what they would like to eat at main meals each day. Young people can also make choices about new clothing, taking part in activities and how they spend their leisure time. Daily life within the home provides young people with opportunities to develop independent living skills, for example, doing their laundry, cleaning and preparing and cooking meals. Furthermore, the structured environment and programme helps young people learn about horticulture and woodwork and contributes to developing their knowledge about society and the development of social skills.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The company has made efforts to make sure that a sufficient number of suitably qualified, competent and experienced persons are employed at the children's home. Furthermore, the senior management team has ensured that staff members who are placed in charge of the home and other staff have substantial relevant experience of working in the home, are not themselves temporary staff, and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods. Despite these measures, the company has encountered difficulties in sustaining the full staffing of the home which was eventually achieved in November 2010. At the time of inspection, there had been further staffing changes and the home did not provide a consistent and stable staffing establishment although a core team of shift leaders was in place. As required at the last inspection, the registered person notified Ofsted of the appointment of a person to manage the children's home and this person was subsequently registered with Ofsted as the manager for the home in December 2010. Since then, the Registered Manager has tendered their resignation from this post and is no longer operational within the home. The registered person is taking an active role in leading and overseeing the operation of the home until a new manager is appointed.

Staff have received training in the completion of the home's documentation and report writing skills and records examined show improvement. The home continues to make arrangements for staff to study for and achieve the relevant awards in accredited childcare training qualifications.

The home was asked to make sure that any issues of concern identified by the regulatory monthly visitor during their inspection of the home were clearly included as recommendations or actions in the written report, to enable the registered person to take any necessary action for improvement. This matter has not been addressed and there is no evidence to show how the visitor's monitoring processes consolidate good practice or lead to improvement in the functioning of the home to secure good outcomes for young people.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each record made within the dedicated bound and numbered restraint book of the use of restraint on a young person includes sufficient details of the behaviour requiring the use of restraint (NMS 22.9)
- ensure the fire risk assessment identifies when fire drills should be undertaken to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable risks. In particular, ensure a fire drill is

carried out promptly following the admission of a new young person to the home (NMS 26.2)

- make every effort to achieve continuity of staffing such that young people's attachments are not overly disrupted (NMS 30.3)
- ensure recommendations or issues of concern are raised in Regulation 33 reports to enable the registered person to take action. (NMS 32.3)