

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC429995
Inspection date	13/06/2012
Inspector	Stephen Graham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	24/11/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is run by a private company and provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

The outcomes for young people living at the home are good. They receive good individual support from the manager and staff team. They are encouraged to discuss their care needs. They attend their education regularly. They participate positively in a broad range of leisure activities in the community. They receive good support and advice regarding their personal health care needs. The staff team encourage young people to practice their self-care skills and create good opportunities for them to do so. The building provides a very homely and comfortable environment for young people to live in.

The staff team provide young people with good support to help keep them safe. Young people feel safe living at the home. The home is very well led and managed. The arrangements used to monitor and further improve the service are thorough. There are some minor shortfalls within the records and documentation available at the home. These shortfalls have only a limited impact on the good quality care that young people receive from the staff team and manager.

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
29 (2001)	ensure that the admission and discharge register for the home presents all of the information required concisely. (Regulation 29(1) Schedule 4 (1))	31/07/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that recruitment records demonstrate clearly how the registered provider has followed good recruitment practice (NMS 16.2)
- ensure that the children's guide to the service includes all of the information recommended, particularly how a child can contact Ofsted (NMS 13.5)
- review the system put in place to notify significant events to ensure that it is effective. (NMS 24.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The support and care young people receive from the staff team is good. Equality and diversity issues are identified clearly in care plans and are positively addressed in daily living. One social care professional with links to the home commended the good quality of 'one to one work' undertaken by staff with young people. They describe how the young person they had placed at the home had 'thrived' in the time they had lived there. Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of these care plans. Young people participate fully in these meetings. They contribute their views personally and feel that they are listened to. Managers and staff team members also attend these meetings and provide detailed reports regarding the progress being made by young people. The staff team work very effectively with a broad range of social care professionals to help ensure that young people receive good quality care. In their feedback, social care professionals describe staff as 'very professional' and highlight the quality of feedback received from the home with regard to the progress being made by each young person.

Young people enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle. They participate regularly in a broad range of healthy activities within the local community and feel that the activities provided are good. Social care professionals commend the variety of

activities provided. Young people access the health services and support that they need. All agree strongly that staff look after them if they feel unwell. The staff team have access to a good range of information, resources and independent advice which helps young people to maintain good health. Social care professionals believe that young people living at the home receive appropriate health care.

Young people enjoy good outcomes in their education. The staff team celebrate their achievements with them. Their learning is clearly supported by the care they receive at the home. They attend their arranged education very regularly. The staff team work closely with education staff to ensure that information regarding the education of each young person is shared effectively and supports good educational outcomes. Young people spoken with were confident, as appropriate to their age and understanding about their readiness for independence and adult life. They regularly practise and develop their self-care skills. One describes how they enjoy the opportunities they have to cook and bake.

Quality of care

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

The support and care young people receive from the staff team is good. They know about their care plans. They can talk with staff about them and regularly contribute their views to them. Equality and diversity issues are identified clearly in care plans and are positively addressed in daily living. One social care professional with links to the home commended the quality of 'one to one work' undertaken by staff with young people. They describe how the young person they had placed at the home had 'thrived' in the time they had lived there. Regular meetings are organised to review the effectiveness of these care plans. Young people participate fully in these meetings. They contribute their views personally and feel that they are listened to. Managers and staff team members also attend these meetings and provide detailed reports regarding the progress being made by young people. The staff team work very effectively with a broad range of social care professionals to help ensure that young people receive good quality care. In their feedback, social care professionals describe staff as 'very professional' and highlight the quality of feedback received from the home with regard to the progress being made by each young person.

The home has detailed admission procedures which are used effectively by the manager and staff to admit young people safely and to help them settle in quickly. Introductory visits are organised where possible. The manager works to ensure that young people are well matched both with the home and the service it provides as well as with the other young people who live there. One social care professional described their experience of placing a young person at the home for the first time as 'really positive'. They describe the staff team as being 'well trained and polite' and comment how staff had 'managed the admission well'. Admission documentation is completed in detail. However, the admission register currently used does not capture all required information concisely.

The home is well furnished and decorated and comfortably meets the needs of the

young people who live there. The home has very well presented communal space. Each young person has their own bedroom. There are more than sufficient bathroom facilities. Young people enjoy easy access to extensive gardens and outdoor play space. They also have good access to a broad range of local community facilities. One social care professional describes how 'I was welcomed when I visited. It felt like a relaxed easy atmosphere, I was offered privacy to talk with the young person'.

Young people are supported by the staff team to enjoy healthy diets. They can help to grow vegetables in the adjacent gardens. They are regularly involved in menu planning and food preparation. The food prepared includes a range of healthy choices and examples of food from different cultures. The staff team are trained in safe food hygiene, first aid and the safe administration of medication.

The staff team work to promote and sustain very positive and constructive relationships with each young person living at the home. They use the plans agreed with young people and their placing social workers to help manage behaviours positively and effectively. Young people regularly give their views on how the home is run. The manager encourages them to do this and maintains good records which demonstrate how ideas and suggestions received are considered and incorporated into overall care arrangements. Young people describe the activities, pocket money and being able to talk with staff as some of the best things about living at the home. Social care professionals as well as parents and carers where possible are also asked very regularly what they think about the service and how it might improve.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has good arrangements in place which safeguard the young people who live there. Young people agree strongly that they feel safe living at the home. There are clear reporting procedures and safeguarding guidance in place. The staff team receive training to help protect young people from abuse. Risk assessments are completed by the manager in partnership with placing social workers, young people and their parents and carers where possible. Care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual children and young people. These are monitored and reviewed regularly. Social care professionals believe that the staff team understand how to protect children and safeguard their welfare. One highlighted the quality of the ongoing assessment of any risks to young people completed by the manager and staff team. These arrangements help to ensure that young people are cared for safely.

The staff team have access to clear procedures which they can use to help ensure that should young people ever go missing from the home, they would be found and kept safe, as quickly as possible. Young people are rarely missing from the home. They enjoy positive and constructive relationships with the staff team. There has been no use of restraint with the young people living at the home and no use of sanctions.

There are good arrangements in place which help to ensure that the home remains a safe place for young people to live. Safety checks and health and safety risk assessments are used to help minimise any risks to young people. The staff team are trained to know what to do in any emergency and they practice this regularly with young people. Arrangements are in place to complete checks on new staff team members to ensure they are suitable to work with children. However, the records maintained of checks completed do not always clearly demonstrate that good recruitment practice has been consistently followed. Visitors to the home are supervised by staff to help ensure that children are kept safe when they are present.

Leadership and management

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

The management arrangements in place at the home are good. There is a Statement of Purpose in place which is reviewed regularly to ensure that it describes accurately the service provided at the home. Young people receive their own summary guide to the home which also contains some good information. However, the current version does not contain all of the information recommended, for example, details of how a child can contact Ofsted, so limiting their ability to do so should they wish to.

The staff team includes experienced staff members who are well trained in working with children and young people. All of the staff team participate regularly in a range of additional training opportunities. This helps to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills required to care for young people successfully. The staff team are regularly supervised. There are arrangements in place to appraise their performance annually. The daily staffing arrangements in place at the home are closely monitored by the manager to help ensure that young people receive the care and support they need.

The home has a good relationship with the local community and neighbours. No complaints have been received at the service. The manager has detailed systems in place which they use to monitor the home's records and to create reports regarding the quality of the service being provided to young people. Independent monitoring visits are also completed which report clearly on all required and recommended matters. The information gathered through these monitoring arrangements is regularly reviewed and used to help plan further improvements to the service. Social care professionals with links to the home believe that improving outcomes for children is the clear priority of the manager and staff team home.

The five recommendations made at the previous inspection visit have each been fully implemented by the manager and staff team.

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.