

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063883
Inspection date	24 February 2010
Inspector	Russell Shackford
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	5 October 2009
--------------------------------	----------------

© 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 Cripins, 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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

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 service is a children's home. It provides three long term placements for young people aged between 10 years and 17 years. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The home is in a village approximately three miles from the town centre. It is close to shops, leisure facilities and public transport.

Summary

This was an unannounced interim inspection to check on key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome group of staying safe and progress made to address actions raised at the previous inspection. This is a satisfactory service with some good features. Young people's privacy is well respected in all aspects and complaints are well handled. Good safeguarding policies and practice promote and protect young people's welfare. Behaviour management is good. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks to the young people during their known and likely activities. Written risk assessments provide clear detail of the action required to minimise the identified risks and comprehensively promote young people's safety. Good policies and procedures help to protect young people's physical safety in the event of a fire at the home. Staff recruitment checks are satisfactory. All staff are trained in appropriate safety subjects including fire safety, complaints, child protection and physical restraint.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The registered person was asked to make improvements in a number of areas. These were around young people's health, leisure, record keeping, care planning, staff support and monitoring of the quality of care at the home.

The organisation has made significant improvements to address the matters raised previously with all of the actions now met. The action taken is reported upon within the main body of the report.

It was recommended that improvements were made to the children's guide to the statement of purpose and staff training.

The manager has begun a collaborative exercise with other managers within the organisation to produce a children's guide in a variety of formats. This will help to ensure that children are given individualised support guidance and information in a manner that is particular to their needs.

The organisation continues to provide opportunities and facilities to enable a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Caring for Children and Young People. This training is recommended to enhance the existing skills and competence of the staff team to meet the needs of the children. However, the target remains unmet.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All staff who administer medication are trained in medication matters to ensure that they know how to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for, and safeguard children's welfare. All staff have received training to enable them to provide first aid if necessary. Therefore children's welfare is safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Details about children's care are recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality. Children have access to a private telephone, which is free to use for reasonable periods. This ensures that children's privacy is respected and the payment method is convenient. All children have a key for their bedroom to help them feel that they control that private space.

All staff have received training on complaints to ensure that they know what to do if a person complains about the service. The children know how to make a complaint because the staff have explained what to do and there is information in the children's guide about how to complain. Children confirm this. Independent advocacy services are commissioned by the provider and, where appropriate, children are supported in making complaints about the service. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are satisfactorily handled.

The manager and staff have received child protection training. The provider has a good safeguarding procedure for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect the children's safety. Therefore, the welfare of children is promoted and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.

There is good evidence of a collaborative approach between the staff and other agencies to minimise bullying. Good written policies support staff in the prevention and management of bullying. There is information for children about what they can do to get help if they are being bullied. Therefore children are protected from bullying.

There is good written guidance for staff to follow in the event that children are absent from the home without authority. This includes good practice guidance for supporting the children upon their return. The guidance is supported by good quality, individualised risk assessments which are recorded for staff to follow.

All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted.

The sanctions policy is good, promoting the use of praise, encouragement and de-escalation of behaviours. Therefore, children are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour. Physical restraint is rarely used to manage behaviour. Staff demonstrate good knowledge of the subject and the associated law. Physical restraint records contain the required details. All staff have received training covering the use of restraint and they follow the home's practice policy.

Staff are knowledgeable about the risks to individual children. Good written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each child during their known and likely activities. Therefore, children's safety and welfare are protected.

All staff and children have been involved in a fire safety drill to ensure that they are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire in the home. The fire safety check records are up to date. All staff working at the home have received up to date fire safety training to assist them in minimising the risks to children in the event of a fire at the home. Therefore, children's physical safety from fire in the home is satisfactorily protected.

All visitors to the home are recorded and the purpose for the visit is noted. There are good recruitment procedures and staff files are regularly audited to ensure that they contain the required information. All of the required information is present. Therefore, there is careful selection and vetting of all staff working with children in the home and there is monitoring of visitors to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff demonstrate a good appreciation of the individual children's needs and the children receive individualised support that is appropriate to their identified needs.

Activities are well organised and vigorously encouraged. Incentive schemes are used to encourage children to participate. This provides children with opportunities to socialise with children their own age, to build their esteem and to gain confidence in other skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The placement plans are very well recorded, with good, clear information to inform the staff what they need to do to meet the identified needs of individual children. One to one work is undertaken to provide children with guidance, advice and support. The records of these and the daily observation records reflect the content of the placement plan well and show the efforts of the staff to meet the identified needs of the child. Therefore, children have their needs assessed well, and well written placement plans outline how these needs will be met.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The organisation has a very good independence training package which where appropriate, children are encouraged to complete. There is good evidence that children are encouraged and supported to keep their bedrooms in a reasonable state. Incentive reward schemes are implemented to support staffs efforts and these are regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Pathway plans are prepared and implemented in a timely manner. Therefore, children receive care which helps to fully prepare them for adulthood.

The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. The garden is safe and well maintained. Routine monitoring takes place which helps to maintain the good standard. There is a good maintenance and repair programme for the building.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children benefit greatly from being looked after by a very well managed and supported staff team. Staff supervision arrangements are good. A permanent manager is in post and they have submitted an application for registration with Ofsted. The manager demonstrates considerable willingness and capacity to improve care and safety at the home. This is evidenced significantly in the very good action taken to address issues raised at the previous inspection. A member of staff said, 'the team is happy and we and the children are clear about what could and should be happening at the home'.

All staff are trained in the required safety and childcare subjects necessary to ensure their competency to meet the needs of the children. However, the target of 80 per cent of staff having achieved National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is not yet met.

A quality assurance system is maintained to monitor the welfare of the children in the home. Monthly audits are undertaken by the manager and unannounced monthly monitoring visits are carried out by the provider. A report of the findings is produced. This good quality monitoring is helping to ensure that the care of children can be adapted in the light of information about how the home is operating. Therefore, there are strong measures in place to improve the quality of care provided and safeguard the welfare of the children.

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 meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

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

- ensure a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a level 3 NVQ in Caring for Children and Young People (NMS 29).