

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pat Stanton
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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 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

The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aged 11 to up to 17 years of age and is situated on the edge of a village in a rural area. The accommodation includes a lounge, a kitchen, a separate education room and three single bedrooms for the young people. The home is four miles from the nearest town, public transport and local amenities. There is a village shop, bus stop and post office within walking distance of the home.

Education is provided through the home's independent school and local education authority provision which conforms as far as practicable to the requirements of the National Curriculum and is inspected by Ofsted.

Summary

The unannounced full inspection assessed all the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) and gauged the home's success in addressing the recommendation from the previous inspection. The ratings for staying healthy, enjoying and achieving are judged as outstanding. The judgement for staying safe, positive contribution and organisation are judged as good and the judgement for economic wellbeing is judged as satisfactory.

The home provides a highly individualised level of care and support to young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, focused on meeting the needs of the individual young person to ensure their wellbeing and the safety of the community. Young people speak very highly of the staff that cares for them and relationships between staff and young people are excellent. All comments from young people are very positive and include: 'I think the home is excellent' 'staff are great, wonderful'.

The home is organised very well to help keep young people safe and secure and staff have access to excellent training programmes to help them meet the needs of young people accommodated.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection improvements in the home include: increased individualised support to help identify strengths and weaknesses of young people and improved care planning which now clearly assess the objectives of the placement plan in line with 'Every Child Matters'.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan, shop and prepare meals. Young people are encouraged to eat meals at the table and share social occasions with staff. Young people say they receive adequate quantities of food and benefit from home-cooked, well-balanced and nutritious meals, provided by staff working in the home. They are involved in choosing their own food and provided with an alternative if the main option is not the preferred choice. Special diets are catered for and

the home is sourced with healthy snacks and fresh fruit. Young people confirm they are allowed in the kitchen to help themselves to food and drinks during the day. The home's kitchen is small but clean and well organised.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health needs are identified and services provided to meet them. Files contain excellent health information and details of the child's General Practitioner (GP). Staff support young people to access external health professionals, in line with their individual needs, including therapists, dentist, hospital and sexual health services. Records of appointments with health professionals are clearly maintained, ensuring the physical, emotional and health needs of young people are identified and appropriate action is taken to support these needs. Young people are encouraged to seek a wide range of health care professionals from staff who are very supportive of each young person's individual needs.

Young people's health needs are met and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment. Medication is securely stored within the home and designated staff are trained to administer medication safely. Excellent recording is maintained for the administration of medication and staff are vigilant in booking medication in and out of the home, ensuring accurate and up-to-date records are maintained. The administration records and recordings are audited by senior staff on a regular basis. Files contain drug information, a photograph of the young person and signatures of staff qualified to dispense medication. Young people are encouraged to take supplements approved by the GP to help them stay healthy and happy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young people are cared for in a safe and secure environment, by a skilled and experienced staff team which helps promote and protect their wellbeing. Good systems are in place to protect young people from the risk of harm or abuse.

Staff are mindful of maintaining privacy and dignity which helps to promote young people's self-esteem. All bathroom doors have locks fitted, and young people confirm they have a key to their own bedroom and staff are mindful of their privacy. All records stored in the home are kept securely to help protect young people.

Young people are able to raise any concerns in a safe and supportive environment. There are various ways in which young people are supported to raise any concerns. For example, one-to-one sessions with staff and regular house meetings. The home has an appropriate complaints procedure and records show young people feel free to make complaints knowing the home takes appropriate action when this occurs. Records confirm young people's complaints since the last inspection are all resolved.

Young people are protected from the risk of harm and neglect. Records confirm there is two child protection issues at the home since the last inspection, both dealt with promptly and appropriately, thereby promoting the protection and wellbeing of individual young people. Staff receive child protection training as part of their induction and staff are clear about their responsibilities to report any allegations of abuse. The home has a suitable child protection policy and staff receive regular training and updates to help keep young people safe.

Systems are in place to protect young people from the risk of bullying. Staffing ratios are high and staff are vigilant in protecting young people from bullying. Records confirm actions are taken to eliminate or reduce the risk of bullying in the home. Appropriate actions are in place to deal with unauthorised absence which ensures young people are safe. Risk assessments include strategies for reducing the risk of absconding which helps safeguard young people.

Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff work hard to enable young people to learn how to keep themselves safe and manage their own behaviour. Each young person is on a reward system for good behaviour and receives points for attending education and completing daily living skills. Rewards include days out and preferred activities with staff. Young people also receive praise from staff each day in 'a positive daily diary'. Staff write positive comments about each young person for them to read and reflect on. This helps boost the confidence of young people.

Incident report forms are completed for all issues relating to behavioural management. In addition to this, records are kept of any restraints and sanctions imposed and these contain all relevant information. Behaviour management is monitored by staff which helps keep young people safe and improve the quality of care they receive.

The home has an appropriate system for notifying authorities of any significant events in the home. There has been no serious incidents in the home since the last inspection and records confirm appropriate action is taken by management when an incident does occur.

The management of health and safety is good and staff are committed to eliminating or reducing all potential risks to young people. This helps to protect young people and staff from the risk of harm or injury. Equipment is serviced regularly and health and safety audits are undertaken at regular intervals which helps keep young people safe. Fire safety tests and drills are carried out regularly although records do not include a fire drill since two young people were admitted to the home.

There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff. Records confirm a robust and safe recruitment practice is in place which ensures that only people who are deemed suitable work with the young people, although application forms do not include evidence why applicants have gaps in employment.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's educational achievements and leisure interests are supported enabling them to achieve their potential in learning and social skills. Systems are in place which recognise and reward young people's achievements. This helps to increase young people's confidence and self-esteem.

Young people receive an excellent level of individual support based on their assessed needs. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of young people's needs and know how to support them. Each young person's interdisciplinary team meet regularly to draw up, discuss and review care plans with the inclusion of the young person. Staffing levels are based on identified needs and are flexible and the relationship between staff and young people is very positive and mutually respectful, helping young people build up trusting relationships.

Education is at the forefront of planning and based on individual needs. Young people attend education from the home's school which is independently inspected by Ofsted. Young people say they receive a good education and complete GCSE exams to help them into their chosen career or college course.

Staff are excellent at supporting young people to try and achieve their full potential and to pursue their own individual hobbies, for example, air cadets, horse riding, singing and dancing. This helps boost the confidence of young people. Young people are included in arranging individual activity programmes with staff and say staff are 'brilliant'. During school holidays and evenings, young people attend activities which include trips out to arts and craft centres, ceramics, ice skating, beach walks, trip to a maze, parks, picnics and annual holidays. Young people really enjoy going out and on holidays with staff and appear very happy living in the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people in the home are appropriately placed there. Young people's needs are assessed appropriately and their care plans outline how these needs are to be met. Care plans contain records which are updated appropriately and include daily routines, activity plans, permissible contact, health plan, young people's background, presenting behaviours, long term goals, useful tools, relevant information, budgeting, college courses attended, education reports, work experience reports, 'Looked After Children' reviews, culture, identity, and risk assessments. The care plans are arranged under the heading of 'Every Child Matters' based on outcomes. Staff's good knowledge of young people's individual needs makes them aware of how their complex needs are to be met. Staff complete daily records which include information about the care, diet intake and support given to young people.

Young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home. Staff contribute effectively to a young person's review and this ensures that any decisions are implemented into the daily care given to each of them. The review report provides up-to-date information, through discussion, as to how young people's individual needs or any concerns are met. Minutes of reviews are available on a young person's file. Their needs are reviewed regularly linked to their individual care and progress within the home. Young people attend their review and contribute to the review and their planned care.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact as deemed appropriate by the placing authority with families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Individual plans contain information regarding contact and details of family and friends who may visit the home.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in line with their individual needs. Staff communicate effectively with young people which results in them being able to respond, making their needs known. Staff are aware of the different ways that individual young people communicate and their responses. As a result young people are helped to make decisions about their lives and influence the way in which the home is run. Positive relationships based on respect exist between staff and young people. Staff are committed and caring in their approach and young people are regularly praised for their achievements and say 'the home is great'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people are given very help and support to prepare them for adulthood. For example, young people are involved in completing semi independent plans which include meal planning, budgeting, shopping, making appointments, cooking, photo copying, benefit forms, accessing government allowances, changing a light bulb, sewing on buttons, writing a diary, accessing sexual health and mental health services and accessing a connexions advisor.

Young people are supported to maintain their individuality and personal preferences in terms of clothing and personal requisites. A system is in place for keeping money safe on their behalf.

The young people live in a home which provides sufficient space to meet their needs. They have their own bedroom and confirm staff give them privacy. Young people like their own bedrooms, however, some bedrooms are damp and have broken furniture and are in need of redecoration. Young people do not have a separate locked space in the bedroom to store personal valuables and not all young people have sufficient window privacy in bedrooms and bathrooms. All parts of the home are homely and comfortable, but some parts are in need of redecoration and repair.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are sufficient in number and experience to meet the needs of the young people. The rotas and daily logs demonstrate there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at all times. Young people receive individual support reflected in the high staffing levels. An appropriate number of staff meet the needs of the young people. As a result young people benefit from good support that experienced staff offer, to meet their individual needs.

Young people enjoy the stability of an efficiently run home with a stable staff team and experienced management. The home is a well established and respected service.

The service has started an annual quality assurance and monitoring system, although feedback received is only from placing social workers. These comments are very positive of the care given to young people from the staff.

Regulation 33 visits are completed regularly to help evaluate and improve the service. This contributes to improved outcomes for young people.

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
25	provide appropriate privacy measures in bedrooms, bathrooms and toilet windows for young people (Regulation (25) (9)	1 September 2009

26	provide clear guidance to all staff and children on admission on what to do in the case of a fire (Regulation 26)	1 September 2009
23	maintain the premises to a good standard; in particular dampness in young people's bedroom, bedroom furniture, bedroom cupboards, toilet seat, shower and stair handrails (Regulation 23).	1 September 2009

Recommendations

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

- ensure the system for recruitment includes written details of any gaps in employment (NMS 27).