

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC031490
Inspection date	4 June 2009
Inspector	Gwen Buckley / Linda Christie
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	22 January 2009
--------------------------------	-----------------

© Crown copyright 2009

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 secure unit is managed by a County Council. It provides secure accommodation to five young people aged from 10 to 17 years old. All the young people accommodated are placed under Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Children under 13 years must have the approval of the Secretary of State to be accommodated prior to admission.

All the young people had the opportunity to contribute their views to inspectors, and all took an active part in the inspection and majority completed pre inspection questionnaires, with an independent advocate, to assist in the inspection process.

The home has a secured external hard-surfaced recreation play area and a small garden area used for on-site mobility. It also has a secure car port and courtyard area for leisure and education use with hard and soft play areas alongside. An internal fitness room is available and living areas comprise of open plan living, dining and kitchen area. Education is provided on site in newly extended premises.

Summary

This was an announced inspection to evaluate the quality of care, education and security at the home. The inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability of the secure unit to restrict children's liberty along with ensuring compliance with the Children's Homes Regulations.

All the national minimum standards, the additional licensing standards under each of the Every Child Matters outcomes and education provision were inspected. Two inspectors from the secure estates team and one HMI education inspector from Ofsted conducted the inspection.

An architectural advisor to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) visited the home to conduct an inspection of the safety and security of the premises. DCSF has funded building development to ensure the home remains a safe place to live while a complete rebuild takes place.

The findings of this inspection show that the home provides young people with individualised packages of care and the staff team work well together and with others to keep young people safe. The main findings of the education provision is that the education at the home is good. Most young people achieve accredited units across a broad curriculum range, even those who stay for comparatively short periods of time.

The home has a strong management team that works well with the staff and visiting professionals. There are elements of outstanding practice evident and findings from this inspection have resulted in the education and care provision at the home receiving an overall quality rating of good. As a result, a recommendation will be made to the Secretary of State for a three year approval to be given for the home to restrict children's liberty.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Good practice recommendations made following the last welfare inspection have been addressed:

A nurse is now employed to work in the home three mornings a week. This is a new post, consultation on how best to develop the role is ongoing to ensure appropriate assessments and recording systems are in place on admission and action taken to meet identified needs.

Young people now have improved access to health professionals after a restraint. The employment of the nurse has improved young people's access as she is in the home three days a week and the home is developing related procedural guidance.

Training has been provided for staff to update their knowledge in child protection that covered local protocols and practice developments and learning from recent incidents. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has visited the home to meet with staff and explain his role and responsibilities.

Significant development of the premises has taken place since the last license inspection. Funding obtained from DCSF has enabled greatly improved facilities to be provided in the home. These include a new admissions room, extended teaching facilities with a new catering and ICT provision; a new secure car port with court yard and play area and a new indoor fitness and games room.

Good progress has been made in response to areas identified for improvement from the last education inspection:

The quality of assessment information has improved with more specific targeting of learning objectives within key skills, particularly numeracy and is now satisfactory. These targets are appropriately linked to behavioural and emotional targets taking good account of the individual needs of the young people but academic targets particularly for the more able learner lack sufficient challenge.

The accommodation for education has improved significantly with the development of a new adjoining class room area, a small multi gym and activities space, the horticulture area outside and the planning room for teaching and support staff.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A balanced menu is provided for the young people covering a three week cycle. Systems are in place to ensure the cook is aware of the dietary needs of young people and a good selection of fresh fruit is freely available to them. Young people have opportunities to taste food that is new to them and from different cultures and countries. Young people's views were positive with regard to the food provided and choices available to them. The cook is aware of individual needs, their likes and dislikes and can cater for individual choices and any special medical and dietary requirements.

Mealtimes are friendly social occasions with staff and young people sitting together, unless there is a specific reason this should not happen such as risks to others. Depending on risks, opportunities to plan and prepare meals are provided for young people. The extension to the school facilities since the last licence inspection has developed catering facilities available and

enhanced opportunities for the young people to cook in school. The catering facility can be accessed by young people in the evening and weekends which will ensure young people who are safe to cook will not be disadvantaged by risks posed by other young people in the communal living space. Staff support individual young people to take an interest in looking after their health, to understand and promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

A health assessment is carried out on all young people when they are admitted to the home. A health care plan is put in place that identifies their individual needs and progress is regularly monitored. Young people have access to a range of health professionals to ensure their physical and emotional well-being are promoted, and includes, GP, dentist, optician, substance misuse advisor, pregnancy advice, psychiatrist and psychology. Individual files contain details of dental, optician, consultant and hospital appointments. The newly appointed nurse is now regularly available and accessible to the young people.

Good support and training provides staff with an understanding of how to manage the presenting complex emotional needs of the young people they care for. Team meetings provide an effective avenue to discuss an individual young person on a weekly basis and to formulate individual approaches to use. Staff and young people where necessary have access to relevant external professionals such as a psychologist and mental health advisor to help them look at issues important to the young people and work on areas that may have brought them into the secure environment.

Young people have access to a variety of services in the home for example, play and art therapy from internal staff and external specialist services provide substance misuse sessions. Psychiatric and psychology assessments and individual work is commissioned if and when required. Young people are cared for by staff that are themselves supported and guided in such a way they are able to meet the individual young peoples' varying emotional needs.

Good system are in place regarding medication administration and recording in the home, with some very good practice developments evident, for example recording systems in place for medication given when a young person is away from the home with staff. Policy and procedural guidance has been updated to reflect recent changes to medication administration and recording practices as well as the implementation of homely remedies and self administration policies. The GP has agreed to the protocol for the 'homely remedies' used. All medications are stored appropriately and a record kept of all medication that comes into and out of the home.

All young people have permission forms completed regarding medication administration, homely remedies and treatment. Young people are able, when assessed as safe and appropriate, to consent to their own treatment and to self administer their own medication. This practice acknowledges their rights and develops their self esteem and self worth. They are protected by a medication and recording system that is appropriately monitored and the likelihood of recording errors occurring is minimised. It also acknowledges their rights and abilities as individuals.

Health care information is available to young people to take with them when they leave. A health care plan is provided with information of treatments, consultants, medication and any ongoing treatment required. This provides a continuity of health care for a young person on leaving the home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There are good arrangements in place to ensure the promotion of a young person's privacy. Preserving young people's privacy and their dignity is difficult to achieve within a secure setting, continual observation for purposes of safety and security takes place. Young people and staff are sensitive to this and achieve a balance, staff respect young people rights when ever possible while keeping young people safe.

The complaints process provides an excellent external perspective and scrutiny of all complains made relating to the home. The home's complaints procedure is robust, transparent and easily accessible and young people have confidence in it. A new 'comments, compliments and complaints in children's services' information booklet is available to parents and carers. The home actively seeks to ensure that young people are protected and their concerns dealt with swiftly.

The home actively promotes the welfare of young people and protects them from abuse. Staff know the child protection and safeguarding procedures and have the knowledge and skills to effectively protect young people and refer allegations appropriately. Young people say 'they feel safe in the home and they have people they can talk with if they have concerns'.

Young people are confident staff have a good awareness of how to spot bullying and will take action to protect them. Staff are vigilant with regard to relationships within the home and issues relating to group living. High staffing levels and supervision of young people mean that there are limited opportunities for bullying or inappropriate relationships to develop. Young people themselves are aware of the potential for bullying and take action themselves to limit this and to work in harmony with each other.

Ofsted receive notifications, as required, of all significant events relating to the safeguarding and protection of children in the home. Procedures in the home and agreed with the police ensure that if a young person goes missing, relevant information is immediately available and appropriately shared to help protect young people.

Detailed discussion of any risks identified around a young person's mobility and how these can be minimised takes place. Staff go to great lengths to enable a young person to access mobility if they have earned it through the reward level scheme, or to progress education, work placements, enrichment and leisure opportunities. All relevant staff have input into the decision making process and the agreement on how to progress and develop individual mobility opportunities for young people. The specific details of the decision making progress are maintained in team meeting minutes and not always in the individual's file. Young people and the community are safeguarded by effective use of mobility risk assessments.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the level system, which raises awareness of their rights and responsibility to others in the home. Constructive responses to inappropriate behaviours are given to young people, often in private as is appropriate. There is behaviour management guidance in place for staff which emphasises the caring nurturing approach taken by the home while acknowledging there are times when more structured boundaries may be appropriate to safeguard the young people in the group at particular times.

Relationships between staff and young people are positive. Young people state 'thank you for helping me change and supporting me through everything, college and work' 'thank you for helping me change for the good'. A parental response to the survey for this inspection states 'the unit is good at supporting young people to deal with the issues that have led them into a secure unit. The staff really care and as the unit is small, they can build trusting relationships'.

Clear and very detailed restraint and sanctions records are maintained. The home keeps up to date with government guidance on expected practices in children's homes. The use of restraints and sanctions in the home is very low, and in single figures for the last six month period. Young people feel staff treat them fairly and the level system is good and gives them something to aim for.

Single separation records are well maintained and when needed cross reference with other incident records, for example, restraint records. The level of detail is good and clearly show whether young people choose to go to their rooms or are directed, taken to their rooms or there for security reasons such as room searches. Young people are asked to sign records to verify accuracy and make comments if they wish, they report that they can use their rooms to 'chill out in, listen to music, and when staff say that have to go to their rooms they understand the reasons why'. The home's quality monitoring of directed separation records is effective and has highlighted specific times when the majority of them occur enabling staff to look at and discuss reasons for this.

Maintenance systems in the home are excellent. Practice in the home ensures staff keep up to date with relevant legislation to ensure the physical safety and security of the building, for example, detailed fire risk assessments have been undertaken in line with Fire Safety Order 2005 expectations and good practice in maintaining the safety of the water system.

Exceptional skills of staff and detailed knowledge of young people in the home ensures their safety. Staff work on an individual basis with young people on a very regular basis which assist them understand their behaviour, health and emotional needs. Recent events in the home show that staff can manage the very complex needs of young people at risk of suicide and self harm very well, and seek external advice when needed. External professionals involved in recent serious incidents praise the home's staff on how well they managed the situations to ensure the safety of a young person, while still considering the needs of the other young people in the group. Staff manage the transition of young people from the home well and this assists young people manage the move home or to their next placement positively.

Young people's safety and welfare is promoted by a consistently rigorous recruitment and selection process. The registered manager monitors the local authority recruitment and vetting procedures and only signs these off as being acceptable when he has satisfied himself that all the appropriate checks have been made. Young people are involved in the selection process for new staff. This was confirmed as very positive by staff who have been involved in the process. The staff personnel files held in the authority's headquarters included all the information as required by regulation. However, they did not consistently contain a photograph of the staff member. Practice in the home ensures young people are safeguarded from the risks posed by those people that provide transport and escort the young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The welfare aspect of enjoying and achievement is outstanding.

Young people receive excellent support and guidance as needed, from staff who are committed to ensuring the experience in a secure setting is as positive and meaningful as possible for each individual. Each young person has a key worker who takes the lead on coordinating all aspects of care and planning during their stay at the home. They ensure placement plans are in place and that regular direct work interventions are undertaken. Each of the young people confirmed that they can relate to staff, feel they understand them and make every effort to meet their needs.

Excellent use is made of external providers to ensure the specialist needs of young people are consistently met. All external providers are seen as important stakeholders in the work with young people and they are seen as part of an integrated professional team who strive to meet the individual needs of the young people. The clinical nurse specialist from the local CAMHS team has a particularly notable involvement with the home that ensures positive outcomes for young people.

The provision of leisure and enrichment activities is excellent. Young people are provided with a wide range of leisure and enrichment activities through which to develop skills and improve self confidence and self esteem. Staff are aware of the importance of young people having fun and playing age appropriate games. A recent extension in physical resources has made it possible to increase the activities available even further. Young people now have access to a multi gym, table tennis, an additional external play area for sports, with garden for growing plants and vegetables and garden furniture for sitting outside. Staff and young people took advantage of the fine weather and spontaneously decided to eat their evening meal outside. This was a relaxed and fun event which demonstrated the relaxed nature of the relationships between staff and young people.

There is an extensive range of games, books, crafts, computer games and now physical activities that the young people can choose from during evenings and weekends. One of the staff is a qualified aerobic instructor and provides opportunities for exercise, should the young people wish to participate. There is a range of art and craft projects in evidence which young people displayed with pride. One young person had recently joined a team in the local area that played 'stool ball'. She attended with a staff member and was pleased to report when her team won the game. Another young person explained how they had recently been fishing and intended to carry this on as an activity after leaving the secure setting.

The individualised focus of the activities is excellent and demonstrates a child centred focus by staff and managers. One young person said; 'I think it is really good the way you structure your time - you can be busy doing things all day'. The same young person also said; 'I think the best thing about being here is education, it gives you a chance to work as a group'.

During school holiday periods a wide range of activities are organised to enrich young people's experience, raise awareness in areas such as diversity and for them to have fun. A number of external groups or individuals are commissioned to provide interesting activities. These include sports coaches, art projects and sessions with someone who has experience in working with children who live in countries experiencing conflict. At the end of the summer holidays the home holds a sports day for staff and young people and friends of the home are also invited. A local art gallery is displaying a poem written by a young person when living at the home.

Opportunity for one day a week work experience in a hairdressing salon is provided. The young person and the salon manager produce a report of how the sessions went. The young person was very positive about being given this opportunity and said they enjoyed having mobility outside of the secure establishment.

The quality of education is good.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Most young people make good progress in relation to their starting points, the majority having been out of school for considerable periods of time and are coping with complex emotional and health needs. The average length of stay is approximately twelve weeks and this restricts the range of accredited work that can be realistically and successfully achieved. However most do achieve AQA accredited units across a broad curriculum range, even those who stay for comparatively short periods of time. Young people develop their basic skills, curriculum knowledge and gain some understanding of skills they may need when moving on to a more independent setting. Achievement is at least satisfactory and in most instances good, although for the more able learners the prescriptive nature of the accreditation pathway used does not encourage or enable sufficient capacity for progression. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and re-enforced across all curriculum areas.

Most young people attend education regularly, engaging very well in lessons and make good progress. The standard of work produced is good. Young people take pride in their work and are consistently encouraged to work to the best of their ability. They enjoy learning and make noticeable improvements in self confidence and self esteem during lessons. Some absences are not always negotiated with education or formally linked to planned mobility and review meetings and these can disrupt the learning process for the whole group and undoubtedly hold up progress for the individuals concerned. The absence of a class register does not assist teachers in recording and monitoring these more erratic patterns of attendance. Behaviour is consistently good and the young people respond very positively to their peers and the education team.

The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. Lessons are well planned and appropriately differentiated to ensure there are a variety of methods and tasks used to stimulate interest and hold young peoples attention, a difficult job at times given the complex welfare needs of the students and the very wide range of ages and abilities within the learning group. In the best lessons young people develop new knowledge and make very good progress. For example, in a graphics lesson the teacher used the white board skilfully and creatively to explore the use of symbols in design in preparation for students own work on the computers. In a geography session tangible progress was observed of one young person who started the session withdrawn and barely engaged to finishing with a flourish completing a word search at the white board alongside her peers. The interactive white board and ICT are used very effectively to extend the learning options and to provide more imaginative ways for young people to develop and present their work.

Assessment of young people's work is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. They receive regular and supportive feedback during lessons from the teacher and teaching assistant (TA). Work is marked regularly with very helpful comments and suggestions for further improvement and all young peoples work books and portfolios are well organised and presented. Young people also comment on how well they think they have worked against their learning

targets on a daily basis and these too are discussed and commented upon by the teacher or TA. There is very good use of display to demonstrate and celebrate young peoples work.

The curriculum range is good. Improvements to the education space internally and to the outside area has clearly ensured the development of a more balanced and rounded curriculum. A coherent 25 hours programme of education based upon the national curriculum is delivered for 38 weeks per year. This is a very good achievement given the range of abilities, ages and complex needs within the teaching group that requires constant and focused attention by the small staff team. The curriculum is well supported by good arrangements for the completion of homework or catch up/extension work when appropriate, and a flexible enrichment programme delivered on the residential unit. Music, ceramics, fitness and horticulture are important new additions to the timetable which are valued highly by the young people. However the current breadth and range of curriculum places considerable pressure on the 1.2 full time equivalent teaching team and the TA. Accreditation is constrained to AQA units only and there remains too few opportunities within education for young people to follow vocational pathways.

Guidance and support are good. Induction is well organised and effectively monitored, with appropriate target setting to ensure young peoples welfare as well as educational needs are taken serious account of. Working in close collaboration with care staff, the education team ensures that young people settle in to education as soon as possible and work at a level appropriate to meet their needs. Initial assessment is satisfactory and in many cases the assessment tools used provide sufficient information to inform learning. However, for others and particularly those with additional learning needs the assessments do not provide staff with the most helpful information and are not always completed in a timely fashion, often because of reluctance by a young person faced with a daunting and inaccessible work booklet. Support for those young people with more specific learning needs, for example dyslexia and basic literacy is provided by teachers and the TA when there is time available; however this arrangement is too ad hoc and does not provide the necessary support to ensure on-going progress.

Teachers and the TA provide very good care and support to the young people and the involvement of care staff in young people's learning during lessons is of a high quality. Teachers complete a written record of each young person's progress and behaviour on a daily, weekly and termly basis. Reports are shared with the residential staff at a weekly review meeting and contributions from education are valued.

Individual education plans are in place and learning targets are reviewed with young people on a regular basis, dependent on the length of stay and the specific welfare needs of the young person. Academic target setting and the current accreditation pathway do not offer sufficient challenge to the more able learners. Education staff are unable to attend LAC reviews held during the school day owing to insufficient capacity within the staff team. This is unhelpful and does not place education at the centre of the review process in this respect.

Very good support is provided by the Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) linked to a local special school. Although the allocation to Lansdowne is only three days per year the PA works very flexibly to ensure that each young person who requires an interview receives one. The PA works hard to ensure they receive relevant advice and guidance about next steps prior to them moving on to a new placement or setting. A good range of careers information and guidance is available both in hard copy and on line. The focus on vocational pathways generally however is underdeveloped.

All education staff are appropriately qualified and receive access to professional development through the federation of schools Lansdowne is affiliated with. Child protection training and behaviour management procedures are reviewed and updated regularly. Capacity to access some training such as broader curriculum development issues however is limited and the staff team prioritise well those activities which they believe will provide the most positive outcomes for young people; for example recent interactive white board training has added exceptionally good value to the quality of teaching and learning. Health and safety issues are considered on a daily basis to take good account of the risks and needs of all young people in the group. Good action is taken to ensure equality and diversity is promoted across the curriculum. Examples of curriculum activities covering cultural and religious beliefs are evident in work books and in displays across the learning areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy sound and mutually respectful relationships with the staff caring for them. They are well supported by a staff team who understand the importance of listening to their wishes and respond to their emotional, cultural, religious, social and physical needs as appropriate.

An effective process is in place for the consideration of referrals to the home. The presenting needs of the individual are considered, as are the needs and demands of the current resident group. This is particularly important in such a small group setting, where young people are living in a secure environment and sharing communal areas, such as washing and toilet facilities.

The young people's case records contain a wide range of information, including that provided by the placing authority. However, the quality and detail of the information from placing authorities varies considerably. In the worst cases very little historic information is provided on young people and not all looked after care plans are relevant to the current placement. There is evidence that the registered manager contacts the local authority requesting information, but there is no evidence of them being contacted further when the information is not forthcoming. Staff are working with some young people about whom they have limited written information.

Young people's needs are identified and addressed at the point of admission and during their placement. However, the process for carrying out and recording in detail the different aspects of assessment undertaken is not reflected in an integrated format. Information is held in a range of places, including staff team meeting minutes, that reflect discussions and decisions about the interventions necessary for individual young people, but these do not include a detailed initial mental health screening for all young people. Whilst the agreeing of targets and the planned interventions are good, as are the outcomes for young people, the gaps in the formal assessment process reflect an incomplete record and insufficient evidence of the very good work done with young people.

Each young person has a placement plan in place that has been agreed with them and their social worker. The placement plan identifies the specific needs for each young person and a 'focus of care' programme is agreed, setting a range of targets for direct work intervention. These are carried out either by the young person's key worker, another staff member who may be more appropriate to address the specific need, such as art therapy, or an external specialist.

All targets are specific to the young person and they include any special needs, including cultural or religious.

Key workers or other nominated staff carry out key work sessions at least three times a week. These are recorded and are clearly linked to the targets set out in the focus of care programme. Young people are actively involved with these sessions and their needs and abilities are taken in to account by staff and the focus is adjusted as necessary. The interventions with young people include, as appropriate, art and creative play therapy and counselling. At times group work sessions are arranged to raise awareness about particular issues, such as equality and diversity.

Young people's needs and development are appropriately reviewed through the usual regulatory reviewing processes, which are well managed by staff. Young people are encouraged to attend and participate in their reviews and staff make every effort to ensure the meetings are inclusive and focussed on the needs of the child. Parents are also encouraged to be involved with review and planning meetings and are supported in doing so by the home. Young people are empowered by staff to make their views known to the agencies planning for their future.

Young people are provided with ample opportunities to share their views on planning for their future and to comment on the day to day running of the home. The house meetings reflect a child centred process, which is not simply used by staff to assert their authority and restate the rules. Listening to young people is a fundamental principle which underpins the work of this home.

Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure young people have regular contact with their families and others of importance to them, such as former carers. They are therefore able to maintain constructive contact and reduce the feelings of isolation. They are encouraged to phone family and friends on a regular basis and any restrictions on contact are known to staff.

Young people are admitted to the home with sensitivity by staff who are aware that entering a secure setting can be intimidating for a child. All the admission processes, which include physical searching, are done at the young person's pace. The new admission suite provides a more homely environment in which the necessary procedures can be carried out, offers privacy and improves confidentiality.

One young person said 'I think the hardest thing about being in here is going through the admission, but the staff don't rush you and you can do it at your own pace, well they did for me, which I think helped quite a lot'.

Young people are prepared well for discharge with the use of mobility trips to visit new placements and to learn to cope outside of the secure setting by having outings in areas local to the home. The practice of arranging a leaving party is excellent and helps the young people leave the secure setting on a positive note. All the young people benefit from observing leaving as a celebration, which also indicates a new beginning elsewhere. All young people take with them a range of photographs, DVDs and other mementoes of their stay in the home. The aim is to ensure they remember the positive impact living in a secure setting has had on their lives and opportunities for their future.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home has independent living skills packs and resources in place to undertake work with young people depending on individually assessed need. The work undertaken enables young people to develop and carry skills with them that they need to help them work towards adulthood and if needed independent living. The work undertaken takes account of age, ability, diversity and culture. Young people report they get the support they need to prepare them for adulthood and parental responses states the home 'works hard to build confidence and encourages positive growth by giving opportunities to allow the young person to use new skills which makes them feel good about themselves'. The self administration policy the home has in place also contributes towards a young person's readiness for adulthood and managing their own medication.

Transitions from the home are well managed and mobility is used effectively. Mobility is a large part of preparing a young person to move back into the community and keep themselves safe. Staff will support a young person when they move from the home and will support the new placement by agreeing and providing outreach work, if needed or requested. Young people are able to and do keep in touch with staff to let them know how they are doing and the home follows their progress by contacting their social workers after they have left.

The home is clean and well decorated providing a relaxed atmosphere. Young people consider it looks like a home not a secure unit. There are three external activity areas, play areas, a patio area and a garden as well as is a new raised vegetable garden. The home is in good decorative order and provides domestic type furnishings in communal areas and family visiting areas. However, there is no en-suite facilities for young people and the toilet, shower and bathroom areas, although clean and functional are in need of upgrading. DCSF funding has been agreed for a new building.

Sleeping-in staff have their own dedicated accommodation. The home has communal areas which included the lounge, resource rooms and the fitness gym. The unit also has rooms which are used for young people to meet with their families/social workers and review meetings.

The unit continues to be well-maintained and ensures that the young people have a warm and comfortable place to live in. Each young person has their own space.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of purpose is well written, appropriately reflecting the ethos and principles which underpin the care and service. There is a range of useful information available for young people, their parents and others involved with the secure children's home. However, young people who might have difficulty reading do not have access to other media to explain the expectations of the home; for example there is no DVD.

The home is managed effectively by the registered manager and his deputy. Clear guidance is available to staff on the expectations of their role with young people.

The support staff receive from managers and colleagues in their work with young people is outstanding. The two managers manage all aspects of the operations and service at the home,

although they appropriately delegate tasks to staff who have particular skills or interests. The aim is to ensure that all staff fully utilise their skills and strengths and ensure that the home provides the best possible care and service for young people. All permanent full time staff have delegated areas of responsibility in addition to their tasks as group workers.

All of those staff interviewed are clearly very committed to their roles and additional duties. They all described work they have done to develop the area of service for which they have responsibility. For example the person taking responsibility for promoting equality and diversity was able to describe a number of innovative and creative actions he had taken to raise the profile of this issue within the home. The staff members taking the lead on the induction of staff and for supporting them when participating in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level three training also described sound processes of practice. This included them working closely together to ensure a smooth transition from the induction programme to the NVQ.

The practice in relation to formal staff supervision is well embedded and takes place routinely. The records reflect supervision carried out to an excellent standard, which is appropriately balanced with discussions about case management, professional development and personal performance. Staff are appropriately held to account when necessary. All staff are subject to an annual appraisal of their progress and assessment of their development needs. The impact for young people is that they are well supported by staff who are themselves supported and who are clear about the expectations of them in their work with young people.

Staff are well inducted into their role at the home. All new permanent staff complete a two week shadowing programme with a staff member experienced in supporting through induction. They also complete the Children's Workforce Development Council programme, which is a workbook based format and takes several months to complete.

There is a good focus on staff training and development and this is well recorded and monitored, including during supervision and appraisal sessions. All staff except for the newest recruit have completed the NVQ level three in child care and the new staff member will commence the training in September. A number of staff describe training they have done that has helped them understand the needs of the young people and to develop skills in that respect. However, most of the training that is planned in the current training and development strategy is to be delivered by staff in house. The opportunities for staff to attend external training are limited. However, young people are cared for by staff who are competent to work with them, who are trained and appropriately inducted into their role.

There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the needs of the young people. There are at least three staff working with up to five young people during weekday daytime periods, with a manager and teaching staff also on site. During the evenings and weekends, four staff work with five young people. This is an excellent staff to child ratio. This enables staff to carry out regular one to one work with young people and address their individual identified needs. Having sufficient staff also enables more opportunities for young people to enjoy trips outside of the secure setting to the local community. There is a very low turnover of staff, with just one staff member leaving in over a year. The annual rate of staff sickness is less than half a percent.

There is good external monitoring of the home by the appointed visitor, which ensures that the care of young people and the service to them is of the highest quality. The monitoring of the reports by external senior managers and elected members is excellent practice.

There are good monitoring and quality assurance systems in place and the two managers have a good oversight of events occurring in the home. Any shortfalls in practice are seen to be addressed with individual staff concerned or the team as a whole. Attempts are made to gather performance management information, including identifying evidence of outcomes for young people. However, there is little evidence of the effective analysis of such information, in order to compare and contrast with practice over time.

Good efforts are made to ascertain what the impact of being in the secure setting has had on outcomes for young people. The processes in place include asking young people before they leave what has improved for them during their stay in the home. Their parents and social workers are asked to give their views on any improvements three months after discharge and if possible up to a year after placement. There is evidence of managers taking on board comments from the various stakeholders, including young people, and making changes to practice and procedures. This is clearly a learning organisation that strives for continual improvement and particularly values feedback from young people and their families.

Young people's records are held appropriately securely. However, confidential information which would be more appropriately placed in young people's secure case records is written instead in the daily log (referred to as the communication book) and in team meeting minutes.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people's individual needs are assessed and appropriately addressed, including meeting any skin or hair care needs, dietary or religious and cultural needs or help to communicate effectively. Young people have been supported when struggling with their sexuality and or dealing with a disability such as dyslexia.

There are positive images around the building that promote diversity and awareness of different cultural heritage. The staff member taking the lead on equality and diversity has carried out some excellent work to raise awareness with young people and staff. He has attended training to learn about Islam and has shared this with his colleagues. He had visited other resources with detailed knowledge regarding working with young people from different cultural and religious heritages. All of this has not only informed planning for young people placed in the home, but also to help them understand the needs and differences of others. The home has also invited young people to visit from a local respite care home who have physical and learning disabilities. The two groups of young people participated in games and activities together in the secure setting. While a great learning experience, both groups of young people reported having enjoyed themselves.

Other activities to help the young people understand people with disabilities have included bringing a wheelchair into the home for young people to attempt to manoeuvre around. They have had lessons in Makaton and sessions to understand hearing and sight impairment. The focus on raising awareness of disability and promoting inclusion is excellent.

Leadership and management are good in education. There is strong strategic management provided by a local Head of School, within the larger federation of schools, and relationships with the local authority have effectively supported improvements in the quality of education at the home. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Policies and procedures are in place to support teaching and learning and behaviour management though some are in need of review. The self evaluation produced for this inspection is broadly accurate. There are effective working protocols between education and the residential unit and relationships

between care and education staff are extremely positive. Performance management and quality assurance systems through regular observation of teaching and learning and appraisal help to improve standards overall. Sharing of good practice and resources from within the federation to include the school in the secure setting is underdeveloped, with the exception of music and special needs support.

Curriculum and subject management at operational level is good although the breadth of provision requires a considerable amount of additional work from teachers and the TA to keep up with the demands of each subject area. The teaching areas though small are well managed with a variety of learning resources and access to good ICT which is supported by the schools federation. Staff work extremely hard, have excellent working relationships and are very resourceful, giving over and above in terms of commitment and time. The constant pressure in this intensive environment to deliver a very full curriculum and in meeting the range of diverse learning and welfare needs is tangible. Expectations on the team to take further the much needed development of the 14-19 curriculum and to implement more challenging accreditation pathways to the timetable is unsustainable with the current staffing structure.

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 effective systems are in place to identify the needs of individuals, at the time of admission and leaving the home. This specifically relates to the need to ensure the home has an effective process to remind Placing Authorities of the need to provide all the information required and the rights of the young person to receive services from their Placing Authority (NMS 12)
- review the operational management structure of education to increase the capacity of the team to develop the 14-19 curriculum offer (NMS 14)
- increase the range of accreditation pathways available particularly to meet the needs of the more able learners (NMS 14)
- ensure there is sufficient time and appropriate learning support within the education day to ensure those young people with additional learning needs receive specific and targeted help as and when required (NMS 14)
- review the procedures for undertaking an assessment of young people's needs and ensure an integrated process that consistently reflects all areas undertaken and included a detailed mental health screening (NMS 2.1)

-
- review recording systems in the home to ensure each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress. This relates to the use of the daily log record and the staff meeting minutes (NMS 35.1)
 - review the monitoring and quality assurance procedures to ensure that they are supported by clear and accessible management information systems that appropriately inform practice and development needed. (NMS 34.6 – LS 5.2 & 5.0)