

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC060758
Inspection date	4 September 2009
Inspector	Wendy Anderson
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	30 March 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

The home provides a high quality care and accommodation for up to five young people between the ages of 11 and 17 years.

This home comprises a large house set in extensive gardens, on the edge of a rural village. The house is divided into two sections. There are three gables which can house two young people. At present this side is used for the more vulnerable young people. The other side of the house is Phoenix. This side can accommodate three young people. There are a number of outbuildings providing a school, gym, workshop facilities, and offices for the company. The home caters for young people with complex behavioural needs, and historically has accepted young people who might have otherwise been in secure accommodation, but it is not itself a secure provision. The home has also moved into taking young people on the autism and aspersers spectrum.

At the time of the inspection there were four young people in residence.

Summary

This was a key inspection.

The home is very young person focused and there is a great emphasis on individualised care. All staff including the manager and directors are dedicated to providing consistent and high quality care for those young people placed within a stable environment. There is a high staff to young person ratio so that the home can deliver the work required with the individuals placed at the home.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The home continues to develop and improve their recording and assessment systems. They have also developed their behavioural management techniques and train their staff in these. Due to the change in the client group they work with, the home has retrained the staff team in working with young people with autism and aspersers. There continues to be a very robust system for monitoring the work undertaken by the home through their new Regulation 33 and 34 monitoring procedures.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people at the home receive an excellent varied and balanced diet, with the benefit of advice from a nutritionist. Young people's dietary needs are taken into account when the menus are compiled. Young people said that they are able to have input to the menus and that they really like the food at the home. At each meal young people have a wide choice of foods available. Young people said that if they did not want any of the foods on offer the staff would always make something else for them. They also said that they are able to help in the preparation of some meals which they really enjoy. The majority of the staff hold a Basic Food Hygiene certificate to help ensure safe food handling procedures. All food eaten by the young people is recorded in young people's individual menu forms with the main menu acting as a guide.

There is a main kitchen in Phoenix as well as a smaller kitchen in three gables. Mealtimes are very social occasions with relaxed conversation between the staff and young people. The dining areas in both sides of the home are well furnished and comfortable, providing a 'family' atmosphere to mealtimes.

Young people's health needs are well met. Each young person has a very detailed health care plan, a medical history and reports from any past additional medical input such as psychologists. The home enables young people to access a range of health care professionals. The young people's files hold details of all health appointments attended including a medical overview report which details what happened at the appointments. Written records are kept of all illnesses, accidents or injuries which may occur during the young person's stay at the home. Young people are provided with advice and information on health issues including substance abuse, sexual health and relationship education within their Person, Social and Health Education (PSHE) as well as from the care staff at an age appropriate level. Child protection is also discussed as part of the PSHE programme.

The majority of the staff have undergone first aid training which is updated at appropriate intervals. All staff have also been trained in the administration of medication. Clear records are kept of any medication administered to young people and these are robustly monitored. All medication is appropriately stored. Young people's files inspected contained written consents for the administration of prescribed and household medication and emergency first aid treatment. Where young people require personal care from staff this is done in a sensitive and caring manner. Staff also receive training in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The home has robust systems in place to safeguard young people. This includes appropriate complaints, child protection, anti bullying, absent without authority, behaviour management and staff recruitment.

Young people's privacy is respected. Young people said that staff always knock and wait before entering their bedrooms. Information on young people is securely stored. Staff interviewed were clear on the young people's right to privacy and confidentiality issues. The home's policy on confidentiality is comprehensive. The home's policy on young people's privacy is detailed and provide staff with clear guidelines. Any restrictions on who young people may have or not have contact with are clearly detailed in their individual files and this information is frequently reviewed and updated. Staff were knowledgeable of any restrictions.

The home has an appropriate complaint policy and procedure which staff interviewed are clear on. The complaint procedure does have timescales set for each stage. There was evidence of complaint being listened to and addressed. The young people said that they were told about how to make a complaint and information on this was in the young person's guide they were given. They also said that their key worker reminded them of the complaints process and it was discussed at young people's meetings. Young people said they felt that any issue they raised with staff would be taken seriously.

Child protection training is provided to all staff. This training forms a part of the thorough induction of staff which is carried out before they begin working at the home. Child protection training is also regularly refreshed for all staff. The manager has attended training with the

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which they then cascaded to the rest of the staff team. Staff spoken to were clear on the safeguarding children policy and procedure. The current robust policies and procedure have been reviewed and done in consultation with the LSCB. The home has a lone working policy which details that lone working will only occur where a risk assessment indicates that this would be safe and at the discretion of the management.

There is a clear anti bullying policy which works with both the victim and the bully. The policy includes information that to work effectively with bullying they have developed a 'partnership' for working with young people, parents, staff, teachers and social workers. This policy is cross referenced with the guidelines and procedures for dealing with racist incidents. Young people said that bullying was not an issue at the home but that if it did occur they would tell staff who would sort things out.

The home has a clear policy and procedures for young people who are absent without authority including the importance of holding a debriefing session with the young person. The policy states the actions staff must undertake if this situation occurs. Each young person has a risk assessment done which details their level of vulnerability and the timescales for contacting the police. The local police have been involved in the development of these policies and procedures.

The home has the appropriate policy and procedure for notifying the required authorities of significant events.

Young people's behaviour at the home is very well managed. The home has an excellent behaviour policy which staff interviewed were clear on. The home is very proactive at developing and adapting its behavioural management systems. The basis they work with on is applied behavioural analysis and verbal behavioural systems. Within this there is an emphasis on positive staff relationships and reinforcement of positive behaviours. There is a bonus/merit system in place which the young people said worked well. They were proud of the points they had accrued and what they had purchased with the cash they had been given for those points. The home works on one incident one sanction premise and that 'every day is a new day' enabling young people to have fresh starts. All sanctions given to young people are revisited at staff meetings to evaluate the effectiveness and possible alternatives to try in the future. The home's sanction and restraint logs and records contain all the required information. The home uses the National Federation for Personal Safety restraint training for its staff; two of the members of staff at the home have been trained as restraint trainers. They provide training for the whole staff team and this is updated every three weeks. This will be more frequent if the staff request it or the manager identifies a need for this. There is a refresher five days' training for the trainers every year. The focus of the staff is to have an in-depth knowledge of the young people, the use of thorough risk assessment, the identification of potential triggers and diversion techniques. The risk assessments for individual young people's behaviours are extremely good. These are reviewed and updated in the light of incidents and/or behavioural changes.

All bathrooms and toilets are of a very good standard and decorative order. They provide young people with the required privacy.

The home has an excellent comprehensive risk assessment procedure which covers the building, the grounds, Health and Safety, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) and activities. The risk assessments for the young people's activities also include copies of the insurance cover for those organisations providing the activity. The young people's individual

risk assessments are exceptionally detailed and are frequently reviewed and updated. The home has a hardwired fire alarm system linked to the automatic fire door closures. The home carries out the appropriate checks on the fire system and equipment. Fire drills happen regularly and young people were clear about what they had to do if the alarm sounded. Visitors are provided with a fire briefing when they arrive on site. COSHH products are stored securely.

The home has a clear process for the notification of significant events which is adhered to.

The home has a robust recruitment procedure for all staff and any other adults who may spend time with the young people such as advocates or anyone the young people have overnight stays or holidays with. The staff files inspected contained all the information required. The home also requests additional information to ensure the highest quality staff are appointed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The home provides very good individualised support for the young people in their care. Young people are encouraged and supported in pursuing their interests and in developing new ones. Young people said that they were able to do activities they would never dream of in previous placement or at home. These include frequent horse riding, kayaking, surfing, rock climbing and music lessons. Staff were able to provide further examples of the vast range of activities the young people can access. This included jet skiing, fishing, scouts and local clubs. The staff said if a young person expressed a wish to try a particular activity then they would set it up for them. This view was supported by the young people. If a need has been identified by the home they will engage any additional professional help the young person may require. Within the home there are lots of games, toys, computer games, books and videos. These are age appropriate. The home is very conscious of the dangers connected to the use of computers and iPods. There was clear evidence of access to these being monitored and appropriate action being taken immediately. The young people said there was always lots to do and staff were keen to be involved in what they were doing which they liked. As previously stated all activities are thoroughly risk assessed.

The home operates a key worker system. They meet with the young people on a regular basis. The recording of these sessions have greatly improved.

There are excellent links between the care and education staff at the home. Their ethos is to provide the young people with a holistic approach to their care. Each young person has a detailed Individual Education Plan and Person Education Plan. Young people do homework and the care staff support them with this. Where the young people take part in extra curricular activities these are linked back to their school work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The home has very detailed and comprehensive placement plans for individual young people, which cover all the required areas. These are reviewed and updated after changes in the young person's behaviours, incidents and/or reviews. Young people are fully involved in their placement plans to promote ownership of these plans.

Young people are fully involved in all of their plans; young people interviewed supported this view. The young person files inspected contained the required Looked After Children's documentation. Young people's reviews happen at the required intervals. There was evidence to support their involvement in these meetings. The key workers support the young people so that they have their input into the meeting and also meet with them afterwards to go through the outcome of the review. Each member of staff produces a report on the young person for their review meeting.

Contact information is detailed within the young person's placement plan including any restrictions on contact. The home supports and enables positive contacts to take place. This includes providing transport for parents and carers and putting them up in local hotels or bed and breakfasts. Young people have access to email and a private phone.

The home has a very robust admission criteria for young people. They will only take young people they feel the service can help and will always look at the existing group of young people and assess the effect of the possible placement on them. The home does not take emergency admissions. The admission process is handled with care and involves visits and overnight stays. When young people leave the home they can receive ongoing support from the home. They have helped young people to move into the community and provided outreach for them even though the placement and funding have ended. The home sees this as important due to their commitment to those placed.

The home sees consultation with young people as vital. There is evidence to support this throughout the young people's files. There are formal house meetings which are minuted. Items from these meetings are discussed at the staff meeting and the outcome of these discussions fed back to the young people. There is also a lot of informal discussion over mealtimes. Young people said that they felt this system worked and they felt listened to by staff. Those who had experience of other children's homes said that they had never felt so involved in their plans or the running of the home before coming here.

Staff and young people have strong, appropriate relationships. Young people spoke of the staff with warmth and affection. They said the staff were fun and they enjoyed spending time with them. This was observed throughout the inspection. The manager ensures staff continuity for the young people. Sickness and holidays are covered within the team by the managers and other directors. Staff receive training in the importance of positive care and control of young people. Staff spoke about young people with respect and an obvious joy and commitment to working with young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are provided with an appropriate amount of money for clothing, personal requisites and pocket money. Young people said they were able to spend their pocket money on what they wished, within reasons of safety. They said they enjoy going with staff and getting their toiletries and clothing. Other young people are given the opportunity to shop on their own where it is assessed they are ready for this. Appropriate records are kept of all these transactions.

The home has completed the refurbishment of the house and this has been done to an exceptionally high standard. The home is furnished to a comfortable homely fashion. There is ample space for the number of young people placed. The bedrooms are spacious and well

furnished. Young people are enabled and encouraged to personalise their rooms. The home is set in attractive gardens. Young people said that they thought the home and their rooms were brilliant.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the work undertaken. The home is very child focused with an ethos of responding to individual young people's needs. This also details the use of movement sensors that will only be used on an individual basis where detailed in the young person's placement plan.

Staff receive supervision at the required intervals and this is of a high standard. The manager carries out risk assessments on new staff where it is felt they can move from fortnightly to monthly supervision. Comprehensive notes are kept of the supervision sessions and staff receive a copy of these. Staff said that they felt well supported by the manager and directors of the home. They said that manager and directors operated an open door policy and are very approachable. Staff felt that this in part was due to the manager and directors being involved in the everyday work in the home. Staff receive annual appraisals. The home has recently revised the system for staff appraisals to make it more robust. The new system involved the member of staff carrying out a self-assessment and the manager carrying out an assessment of the member of staff. A meeting is then held between the two where a personal development plan is drawn up. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis and are minuted. These meetings cover all the required points with the main focus on the young people.

The home has very good staffing levels for the number of young people resident. The staff team is varied in gender and age. The core of the staff team are very experienced in childcare. At least 80% of the staff are NVQ Level 3 trained and newly appointed staff without NVQ at Level 3 are required to undertake this training. Staff undertake a wide range of training over the year. Staff said that they are able to request training as well as management recommending courses.

The home has devised a process of incorporating the Regulation 33 and 34 monthly monitoring systems. One of these reports is carried out for each individual young person and then one for the home as a whole. This is carried out by the manager who is also one of the directors. The reports are extremely detailed and comprehensive.

Young people's files contain all the required information and are stored securely. Young people are encouraged to have input to their records.

Equality and diversity within the home is outstanding. The home and school through their Person, Social and Health Education (PSHE) work with the young people on different cultures, diversity and tolerance. The ethos of equality and diversity is reflected throughout the home's policies and procedures.

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

There are no recommendations.