

Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC060758
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 August 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Heather Chaplin
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22 January 2010
--------------------------------	-----------------

---

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](http://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 high quality care and accommodation for up to five young people between the ages of 11 and 17 years, who may have emotional and behavioural issues. Some young people may also have specific learning disabilities, in particular, those on the autistic spectrum.

This large home is on the edge of a rural village, but within easy driving distance of a small town. The house is discretely divided into two areas, but retains its homely character. Young people are accommodated in the part of the home that best meets their needs.

There are extensive gardens and a number of outbuildings. These provide a school, small gym, workshop facilities and company offices. The school has recently undergone considerable construction work to provide additional space and facilities.

### **Summary**

This was a very positive unannounced inspection which found every outcome area to be outstanding. Staff and managers work very effectively as a team to provide high quality accommodation and excellent, individualised care. No actions or recommendations have been made.

Parents said: 'they set high standards for themselves and achieve them...within the constraints of his disability, our son is given the opportunity to make as good a contribution as we could possibly expect'.

Three young people are in placement at the moment. One young person was present and helped with the inspection process.

Staff files, policies and procedures are held on this site for all three homes in the company's management. These were inspected for all three homes during this visit.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no actions or recommendations made at the last inspection. The home has continued on a trajectory of improvement, based on self-assessment and effective, forward-thinking management.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people in this home have individual, well-balanced and varied meal plans to ensure that all their dietary needs are met. Special diets are provided when required. Staff have a good understanding of the particular dietary issues affecting young people on the autistic spectrum. All menus are based on the advice of a qualified nutritionist. Parents and social workers also commented very positively on the food provided.

There are two kitchen areas in this home. Both provide a homely and comfortable area for staff and young people to sit down and relax over a meal. Young people are encouraged to cook

and help prepare meals; observation during the inspection shows that this is done to a very high standard.

Health care planning information is detailed and comprehensive. All young people are registered locally with a doctor, dentist and optician. The home has access to a clinical psychologist, who arrived during the inspection to work with some young people. He may assist with a variety of issues; for example, bereavement and anger management. Young people may access other health care professionals as required.

Sexual health needs and issues around substance misuse are addressed openly and honestly as part of the on site school's Personal, Social and Health Education programme. Care staff will also discuss these matters with young people as the need arises.

The majority of staff have received training in medicines administration. This process is very well managed and recorded. Medicines are kept safely and there are robust audit systems in place to ensure that young people receive the right medicine at the right time. There are signed medical consents on file for the administration of first aid and any medicines required.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are all aware of the company's policy on privacy. They knock on young people's bedroom doors before entering the room. Young people have their own lockable bedrooms. Staff can access rooms with a master key in the event of an emergency. Young people have access to a phone, which they may use to speak with family and friends.

There is a complaints procedure which is explained to young people in the Children's Guide to the home. There have been no recent complaints, but if they should arise, there is an effective system in place for recording these.

The home has a clear child protection policy which was developed in consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All staff receive regularly updated child protection training. Senior managers have attended a Level 3 update course to ensure that they are aware of the latest developments.

The home ensures that incidents of bullying are anticipated and kept to a minimum. There are no current bullying issues for the young people living there. When bullying does arise, it is responded to very swiftly and both parties are helped to resolve the matter.

Absence without authority is not a frequent occurrence, but one young person is absent for long periods and was away from the home during the inspection. Absence without authority is addressed very effectively through risk assessment and police involvement in planning and recovery.

The home has an on-site health and safety manager, who is also the physical intervention trainer. He receives annual five day training updates and ensures that staff have opportunities to refresh their skills. Any restraints are recorded in a suitable log, which contains all the necessary details to enable interventions to be monitored. Young people are always spoken to after any physical intervention to explore what can be learned from the incident.

Health and safety has a very high priority in this home. Risk assessments are in place for all the home's activities, premises and fire risks. These are all of an exceptionally high standard. Electrical equipment and all other routine tests, including fire drills and alarm checks, take place at the recommended intervals. The home keeps good quality accident records and uses only activity resources where qualified instructors are available.

The company operates a robust equal opportunities recruitment procedure. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed every three years and the home ensures that any gaps in employment history are explained. The company routinely takes up three written references and verifies these by telephone. Seven staff files were examined from the company's three children's homes, and all contained full information to comply with Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This helps to ensure that staff working with children are suitable for this role.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The home excels at meeting young people's needs in every respect. Young people confirm that they can speak with any member of staff. They receive exceptional quality individual support through an effective key worker system. Individual sessions are well recorded and show that significant work takes place. The home and education staff work very well together to provide a 'joined up' approach to care.

The school premises were closed during the inspection because it was school holiday time, but the inspector was shown around the new building. This has almost doubled the previous size of the school and provides a high standard of educational facilities. One parent said: 'the school provides a really good educational environment...extraordinary for such a small establishment.'

The company says that its aim for the school is 'to help young people to rediscover learning in a fun and informative way that leads to qualifications and good life skills'. Feedback from parents and social workers shows that this objective is achieved.

The home provides an excellent range of activities for young people. These include riding, adventure centres, gardens, beach visits, surfing, deep sea fishing, bowling and the cinema. Young people say that they enjoy their activities. They have access to some gym equipment as well as a trampoline at the home. Public gym membership is also encouraged. The home has a very clear healthy lifestyle ethos, which permeates through all its activities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The home produces detailed, comprehensive and regularly updated placement plans. These provide excellent information which helps staff to look after the young people to a high standard. Children's files are well-ordered and information is easy to locate within them. Reviews are held at the specified intervals. Staff who work with the young person produce reports for the meeting and encourage young people to participate.

Contact plans are also of a high standard, with details of permitted and non-permitted contacts in line with the local authorities' placement plans. Parents are supported to visit the home, with practical help in making what can be a very long journey and finding accommodation.

The home has sensitive procedures for admitting young people and helping them to move on into the community. Young people always receive a visit. They are encouraged to visit the home, and emergency placements are not accepted. The home exercises considerable care in balancing the mix of young people, to make sure that there is no detrimental effect on the group. Young people are well supported after they leave the home. The company now has a separate home for this older age group.

Young people are consulted regularly about their day to day routines and are encouraged to make informed choices about every aspect of daily life. There is a regular, minuted house meeting and specific requests arising from that meeting are discussed in the staff group before any decision is made.

Relationships between staff and the young people are warm and supportive. Staff at all levels within the home's organisational structure respond to young people in a friendly but firm way. This supports the development of appropriate boundaries, and is tempered by plenty of good humour. Young people confirmed that they are happy in the home. This is substantiated by the relatively low number of serious incidents.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

There are currently no young people on independence programmes, but the home encourages them to acquire cooking, shopping and other life skills throughout their stay. One social worker said: 'the home encourages young people to manage their own money and help to make decisions that affect their future'.

Young people are well-provided-for financially, and receive regular allowances for clothing and pocket money. There is a system of rewards which includes house and school bonuses. This system enables young people to save up rewards to contribute towards more expensive activities.

The home has been completely refurbished to a very high standard. All the furnishings and fittings are of good quality and the decoration is homely and attractive. The house stands in extensive gardens with well kept lawns and a large pond. There is easy access to open countryside with plenty of opportunities for walking and other physical activities.

Young people have attractive, good sized bedrooms which they like to personalise with posters and pictures. Communal rooms are relaxing and pleasant, with musical instruments and games to play. The home is exceptionally well maintained and provides a safe, comfortable and homely environment.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The home and school work together to help young people learn about different cultures and individual needs. All policies and procedures seen are underpinned by this ethos. The staff understand and promote the needs of young people on the autistic spectrum very well.

There is a clear Statement of Purpose which meets all the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This document includes details of any electronic monitoring measures that may be used to help keep children safe.

The home is very well staffed, with a skilled, experienced team. Well over 80% of staff hold a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 (NVQ 3) in the Care of Children and Young People. All new staff complete a comprehensive induction and are required to undertake NVQ 3 when their probationary period is complete. The company is seeking to improve and expand staff training further. To this end, it has joined the National Autistic Society accreditation and training scheme, which will help them to develop further specialised skills.

The Registered Manager is also the provider. This means that there is no requirement for the home to submit Regulation 33 reports to Ofsted. Reports on weekly and monthly checks are completed as required and show robust monitoring of all the home's functions.

The home has a very strong management team which is closely involved in the day to day running of the house. The managers know the young people well and provide excellent support to the staff team. The Registered Manager is also the manager of another home several miles away, and oversees a third home. She holds NVQ 4 in the Care of Children and Young People and NVQ 4 in Management.

Young people's main files are kept in the management offices at this home, with working files in a staff office in the house itself. All files are well maintained and very clearly recorded. They contain all the information required by Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

## **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 Children's 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.