

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC407753
Inspection date	4 August 2010
Inspector	Heather Chaplin
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	4 March 2010
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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 is a modern detached house on two levels overlooking extensive grounds. It is situated within a short drive of a small town. There is access to other towns in the area and to shopping, sports and leisure facilities.

Managed as two distinct units, the home comprises a ground floor unit, with a lounge, kitchen and two bedrooms. This floor has a bathroom shared by staff and young people. The upper floor unit has a large kitchen, office, young person's bedroom and lounge. There is another bathroom with a shower on this floor.

The two young people meet up for some activities, but are generally cared for separately. Education is provided at the company's school several miles away.

Summary

This was a very positive inspection which was announced with 36 hours notice, to ensure that the manager was available to assist with information. The inspection was timed to coincide with two other key inspections of homes in the same ownership. All policies and procedures are shared by the three homes in the group. Staff files are kept centrally at one of the other homes and were inspected collectively as part of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This was the home's first key inspection since registration, so there were no previous actions or recommendations.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have individual, well-balanced and varied meal plans to ensure that all their dietary needs are met. Menus are based on professional nutritional advice. Young people are actively supported in preparing meals that reflect their ethnicity and culture. They enjoy sharing meals with staff in the home. There are two high quality kitchen areas in this home, one on each floor. Both provide comfortable areas for staff and young people to sit down together for meals, or to do craftwork and other activities.

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 may assist with a variety of issues to help promote good emotional health. Young people may access other health care professionals as required. Staff have sought out specialist advice on hair care appropriate to a young person's minority ethnic group, which is good practice. Sexual health needs and issues around substance misuse are addressed sensitively.

The home has worked extremely well to improve the management of one young person's medication, which was not well managed in a previous placement. The majority of staff have received training in medicines administration. This process is very well managed and recorded,

with robust audit systems in place to record medicines receipt, administration and disposal. There are signed medical consents on file authorising the administration of first aid and any medicines required.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their own lockable bedrooms, but staff can gain entry to rooms safely in the event of an emergency. Young people have access to a phone so that they may speak with family and friends. Some phone calls are monitored, in line with the local authority's contact plans. Young people are aware of this and are involved in the process. The home keeps written records of calls to help ensure young people's safety. There are two bathrooms in this home, both equipped with suitable locks. There is a high standard of safety and cleanliness throughout the home.

There is a sound complaints procedure, which is well explained 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. This has been developed in consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff have access to locally agreed child protection procedures online.

All staff receive regularly updated child protection training; senior managers attended a Level 3 update course to ensure that they are aware of the latest developments.

There are no current bullying issues for the young people living in the home, as they are only together under staff supervision. If bullying does occur, it is responded to very swiftly. There has been no absence without authority from the home.

The sanctions log is very well recorded. Staff use whichever method is most suited to the individual young person, to bring about changes in behaviour. For example, some young people respond well to star charts, others to financial sanctions.

Physical intervention training is provided regularly. 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.

Risk assessments are in place for all the home's activities, premises and fire risks. These are written to exceptionally high standard. The home uses only activity resources where qualified instructors are available.

Electrical equipment and all other routine tests, including fire drills and alarm checks, take place at the recommended intervals.

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 receive exceptional quality individual support through an effective key worker system. Difficult areas are addressed with sensitivity, including those around sexual health needs, race, ethnicity and colour. Efforts have been made to find a black mentor for one young person, because the staff are well aware that the home is in a largely white rural area and the young person has identified this as a need.

The school premises are situated some miles away. The inspector was shown around the school two days before this inspection. The school has recently been extended to provide a high standard of educational facilities.

The home organises an excellent range of activities for young people. These include 'Boxercise', horse riding, visits to gardens, woodland walks and beaches. Young people say that they enjoy all their activities, all of which fit in with the home's healthy lifestyle ethos.

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. Young people are aware of the contents of their files. All staff sign to say they have read and understood the placement plans.

Young people confirm that they are involved in their reviews, which are held at appropriate intervals. Staff produce reports for the review meeting and encourage young people to participate. Some young people have an advocate to help them to express their views. Contact plans are of a very high standard and staff support young people to have positive and constructive contact in line with the local authorities' plans.

The home has sensitive procedures for admitting young people, who are encouraged to visit the home if possible. They always receive a visit from the manager while still at their previous placement. Emergency placements are not accepted because of the disruptive effect this can have on other young people in the home. 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 confirm that they are fully involved in day-to-day decision making. There are separate, regular and minuted house meetings for both the young people in the home. Both young people chose their keyworker and have full involvement in planning their activities.

Relationships between staff and the young people are warm and supportive. Young people confirm that they are happy in the home and that they are making excellent progress.

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.

The home is recently re-registered by this company and is attractively situated in a rural residential area with exceptionally good views. The interior of the home is presented to a very high standard. All the furnishings and fittings are of high quality and the decoration is homely and attractive.

The house stands in an elevated position with a long sloping garden. There is easy access to open countryside and the seaside, with plenty of opportunities for walking and other physical activities.

Young people have attractive, good-sized bedrooms. They may choose decorative colours themselves, and personalise their rooms with posters and pictures. The lounges are light, relaxing and pleasant. 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. Both young people in the home originate either from other countries or minority ethnic communities. Staff are all white and British in origin, but they work very hard to ensure that they meet the young people's ethnic and cultural needs. The home and school work together to help young people learn about different cultures. Not all the young people in this home have learning disabilities, but staff understand and promote the needs of those on the autistic spectrum exceptionally well.

There is a clear Statement of Purpose which meets all the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.

The home is well staffed on a one to one basis, with a skilled, experienced team. Over 80% of staff hold 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 demonstrates strong and effective leadership of the home. She holds NVQ 4 in the Care of Children and Young People and is currently in the process of enrolling on NVQ 4 in Management. Reports on weekly and monthly checks are completed as required and show robust monitoring of all the home's functions. The home's manager is very well supported by an excellent senior management team.

Young people's 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 Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.