

Inspection report for Children's Home

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

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

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

Three young people currently live at the home and were present during the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this unannounced key inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is an outstanding home providing young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties with excellent levels of individualised care and support.

Comprehensive care plans are in place and these contain information on how individual young people's needs will be met. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and enjoy regular and varied activities. Safeguarding children arrangements prioritise the protection of children. Young people feel supported and enjoy their time at the home.

The home is very well organised and staff have access to a wide range of training programmes to enable them to meet the needs of the young people accommodated.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, no actions or recommendations were made. The home has undergone refurbishment following extension work to the kitchen, providing greater communal space for the young people at the home. This work has been completed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan, shop and prepare meals. Young people and staff eat meals together and this provides opportunities for social interaction. Young people say that the food at the home is 'really good'. One young person during the inspection showed how, each week, one young person takes responsibility to plan, shop and prepare an evening meal for all young people and staff. This enables the young person to develop skills for preparing fresh food for groups of people and links in with individual planning for moving onto independence. Special diets are catered for and the home is sourced with healthy snacks and fresh fruit. Young people confirm they are allowed in the kitchen to help themselves to food and drinks during the day.

Young people's health care needs are supported effectively. All young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. Staff support young people to access external health professionals, in line with their individual needs, including therapists, dentist, hospital and sexual health services. Records of appointments with health professionals are clearly maintained, ensuring the physical, emotional and health needs of young people are identified and appropriate action is taken to support these needs.

The home has a comprehensive medication policy and procedure in place. This promotes the health care of the young people. All staff responsible for the administration of medication have received training to do so. Records of medication are clearly recorded and there are detailed checks in place to ensure that medication is stored, administered and recorded correctly. Staff have also completed first aid training and this ensures that young people are supported appropriately if first aid is required. Records contain the required authorisation for the administration of medication and first aid. Young people are encouraged to take supplements approved by the GP to help them stay healthy and happy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure that the young people have their privacy respected. All documentation relating to young people is stored securely, promoting confidentiality. All young people have their own bedrooms that they are able to lock if they wish to do so. These locks can be over ridden in an emergency. Where room searches are undertaken, staff inform young people of the reason why it is being undertaken and they are supported with the process. There is a payphone in place that enables young people to make and receive telephone calls in private. Young people are provided with a pre-paid phone card which has additional monies added on a weekly basis.

There is a detailed complaints policy and procedure in place. Young people say that they are aware of how to make a complaint and one young person said 'if I have a complaint to make I know that staff will listen to me and I will receive an answer to my complaint'. Records of complaints are maintained. The young people also have a suggestion box where they can raise issues that may not be a formal complaint, verbal and written responses are made to both complaints and suggestions. This ensures that all complaints are responded to appropriately and young people receive clear outcomes to these.

There are clear procedures in place to ensure that young people are effectively safeguarded. This includes appropriate training for all staff on child protection and safeguarding. This training forms part of the core training programme and is updated on a regular basis. Young people say that they feel safe and looked after well by staff. One young person said 'the staff make sure that we are safe and look after us really well, if I have anything that worries me I can talk with any of the staff here'. There have been no issues regarding bullying and all staff remain vigilant to ensure that none of the young people are being bullied or instigating bullying. Young people who are vulnerable as a result of going missing are protected by robust practice and effective liaison with appropriate agencies. On their return from running away, young people are very well supported to evaluate the reasons for going missing and to identify alternative and safer responses.

Young people benefit from having clear and consistent expectations regarding behaviours. All young people have a detailed behaviour management plan in place. This enables staff to provide a consistent approach to the young people to support them with developing and maintaining appropriate behaviour. Sanctions and physical interventions are used appropriately and the manager is vigilant about evaluating the records to establish any trends and patterns. Young people say that they feel that the sanctions are fair and they are only physically held when they are at risk of hurting themselves or others. Records are extremely well organised and clear. Logs are completed thoroughly and cross referenced accurately with other documentation. Staff view the young people very positively and work hard to enable them to develop alternative and positive behaviours.

There are comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures in place. This ensures the health and safety of young people and staff is promoted at all times. Appropriate fire risk assessments are in place and each young person has been involved in developing and drawing their own emergency evacuation plan. Fire drills are held at different times of the day and evening to ensure that young people are aware of the procedure to follow. All safety certificates are in place and up-to-date.

Visitors to the home are vetted to ensure the safety of young people. Young people are protected by an effective staff recruitment process that ensures that all necessary checks are in place prior to a member of staff commencing employment at the home.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

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

Young people receive an excellent level of individual support based on their individual assessed needs. There is a key worker system in place to further support the individual needs of the young people. Key worker teams ensure that there is a continuity of care and support to individual young people. Regular key worker team meetings are held and these enable comprehensive reports and reviews to be developed to identify the individual achievements made by each young person. Staffing levels are based on identified needs and are flexible and the relationship between staff and young people is very positive and mutually respectful, helping young people build up trusting relationships.

Young people attend education from the home's school which is independently inspected by Ofsted. Young people say they receive a good education and complete GCSE exams to help them into their chosen career or college course. They are also supported to attend work placements as part of their educational attainment records.

Staff support young people to attend and develop a number of leisure interests. These include accessing local leisure facilities, horse riding, music and dancing lessons. This assists young people to develop skills and confidence. During school holidays young people are supported to go on an annual holiday or to have a number of arranged days out depending on their individual wishes. Young people say that the range of activities and access to leisure facilities is really good and spoke positively about activities undertaken during holidays. All of the young people living at the home spoke about their experiences of living at the home as being 'really good'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people living at the home have their needs assessed and have individual placement plans in place. These plans are comprehensive and clearly detail individual needs, how these are to be met and by whom. Placement plans contain records which are updated appropriately. The plans are set out under the 'Every Child Matters' outcome areas and provide staff with the necessary information to effectively support the young people. These plans are reviewed on a monthly basis and any changes clearly identified to enable current needs to be met. Young people are also encouraged and supported to attend their formal looked after children reviews to ensure that their wishes and views are heard.

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

Young people are encouraged and supported to be involved in decision making about their lives, future and how the home operates. Regular young people meetings are held and minutes of these meetings record all discussions and plans for the home. In addition, the introduction of a suggestion box has enabled young people to make ongoing contributions to how the home operates. The manager responds to these suggestions verbally and in writing. Young people say that they feel that their suggestions and contributions to meetings are taken seriously and this influences how they have their needs met. Young people benefit from having positive relationships with staff who provide good role models and offer excellent support.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given help and support for preparing for adulthood. Young people are involved in completing semi independent plans to enable them to gain skills and experience for their future. These include preparation of food, budgeting, use of local transport facilities, understanding tenancy agreements, accessing connexions advisors and promoting individual health care needs through accessing appropriate community health care resources.

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

The home has recently undergone a refurbishment, including an extension to provide a larger kitchen and living space downstairs and a further bedroom upstairs. This has increased the communal space available for young people. Young people all have their own bedrooms which they are able to personalise by choosing the décor and pictures that they wish to have. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets available that have lockable doors and curtains to ensure privacy. Externally there is a small garden to the front of the home and a larger garden to the rear which provides space for young people to play or relax in. Young people say that the home is comfortable and welcoming and all say that they enjoy living there.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home has a Statement of Purpose in place that clearly outlines the aim and objectives of the home and provides a range of information about how the home operates to support the young people. This document is made available to placing authorities, and where appropriate, parents and carers. Young people are provided

with a young person's guide which contains information about the home and what it is like to live there. These documents are kept under review.

The home provides a high level of staffing to meet the young people's needs. Rotas in place demonstrate that staffing levels are consistent and there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at all times. As a result young people benefit from good support that experienced staff offer, to meet their individual needs.

Staff are provided with good levels of training to enable them to further develop their skills to support the young people. Supervision is provided to all staff to further support them within their role.

The manager has been in post at this home for the past 12 months, having previously been a Registered Manager at another home. An application to Ofsted to be the Registered Manager has been submitted. Detailed management monitoring systems are in place to enable the manager to have a good overview of how the home is meeting the young people's needs. These clearly reflect the service being provided. In addition, Regulation 33 visits are completed regularly to help evaluate and improve the service. This contributes to improved outcomes for young people.

Individual care files for young people are comprehensive and contain clear information regarding individual needs of young people and how those needs are being met at the home.