

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspection date	07/12/2010
Inspector	Heather Chaplin
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Date of last inspection	02/08/2010
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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 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 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 undergone considerable construction work to provide additional space and facilities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a very positive unannounced random inspection of the home. Young people were all in school at the time and were not available for consultation.

Three outcome areas were inspected on this occasion and all were found to deliver outstanding care for young people. No actions or recommendations have been made.

Improvements since the last inspection

The home was found to be outstanding on the key inspection held on 2 August 2010. No actions or recommendations were made at that inspection. The home continues to strive for excellence in all areas.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people in this home receive a healthy, well balanced diet. Menus are planned on an individual basis and special diets can be catered for. Young people and staff eat together to encourage a family atmosphere.

Health care planning is thorough and detailed, to enable staff to meet young people's needs effectively. Young people are registered with local health care practitioners.

They may also access a clinical psychologist who provides individual sessions in relation to bereavement, anger management and other issues. The home works well with the school to ensure that young people receive plenty of information to advise them on substance abuse, smoking, sexual health and relationships as part of their personal, social and health education programme.

Medicines are stored and handled safely in the home. Records of medicines administered are detailed and complete, to provide a full audit trail. Young people have signed consent to emergency treatment forms on file, to help ensure that they can receive necessary medical assistance without delay.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are kept safe in this home through a range of effective policies and excellent staff practice. Staff are aware that they have to knock before entering a young person's room. All young people have their own rooms and are able to lock them. Staff can gain emergency access to bedrooms and bathrooms, if necessary, by using a master key. There are two bathrooms and two separate shower rooms in the home, which is excellent provision for the number of young people living there.

The home has an effective complaints policy. Any complaints received are well recorded. The complaints log was inspected and shows that there have been no issues since the last inspection.

There are robust child protection policies in place. These have been written in consultation with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There have been no child protection enquiries in relation to the home since the last inspection. Staff and the home's managers receive regularly updated training in safeguarding.

The staff have raised a concern regarding young people who have reported being bullied whilst at a local college. This is now being addressed. There is no evidence of any bullying within the home. If this arose, it would be responded to swiftly, in line with the company's anti-bullying policy.

The home has a clear procedure, drawn up in consultation with the local police, for responding to young people who are absent without authority. Excellent strategies are in place for each young person to help to find them and bring them back to the home safely. Young people who absent themselves are welcomed back to the home. A discussion takes place with the young person to make sure that they are safe and to find out why they found it necessary to leave the home without consent.

No notifications to Ofsted have been necessary since the last inspection. Restraints and sanctions logs were inspected and are well recorded. Staff receive regularly updated training in physical intervention and some training was taking place during the inspection. Restraints are generally at the lowest level of intervention and de-escalation techniques play a large part in behaviour management strategies.

Sanctions are fair and appropriate to the incident. For example, young people may receive a ban on car journeys if they behave in a dangerous manner whilst in the car. All young people have individual risk assessments for their behaviour and for any activities planned.

Risk assessments are in place on the premises, risks of fire and for hazardous substances in the home. There have been a small number of accidents to staff and young people, all of which are well documented. The home's electrical and other equipment is checked regularly for safety. Fire safety checks are conducted at the intervals recommended by the local fire and rescue service. These are recorded in a log book. Fire drills take place very month, which is very good practice.

The home has effective, equal opportunities-based recruitment practices. Several staff files were inspected on the last inspection, when they met the requirements of Schedule 2 of the Children's Home Regulations 2001. They were not seen again on this occasion.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home's Statement of Purpose accurately reflects the work undertaken in the home. It contains all the information required by Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. There is an excellent children's guide, which is given to young people on admission. This is a very professional document containing high quality photographs, illustrating aspects of life in the home.

Supervision records show that all staff receive individual monthly sessions. There is an annual appraisal scheme in place to help staff with their professional development

and to identify training needs.

Staff are generally well-qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 (NVQ) in the Care of Children and Young People. New staff embark on an NVQ at level 3 as soon as their probationary period is complete. One member of staff is starting work on an NVQ at level 4 in care.

Staff confirm that the company has arranged a considerable amount of training in the past year. Staff induction follows Children's Workforce Development Council specifications and a workbook is completed, which contributes to the evidence required for the NVQ at level 3. In addition to induction training, staff have had access to training on the subjects of epilepsy and moving and handling, specialised communication systems and working with children on the autistic spectrum.

The home is very well-managed, by skilled and experienced professionals. The Registered Manager holds an NVQ at level 4 in the Care of Children and Young People and in Management. She is also the Registered Manager for another home in the area operated by the same company.

Regular internal and external management monitoring checks take place in this home, but there is no requirement for the company to submit Regulation 33 reports to Ofsted. This is because the Registered Manager is also a company director and therefore, she is one of the providers.

One young person's file was inspected on this occasion. It was very well organised and contains all the information required to enable staff to look after the young person to a high standard. All documentation is in place to comply with Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001.