

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Malcolm Stannard
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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 secure children's centre is owned and managed by a local authority. It is registered to provide secure care and education for up to 20 young males between the ages of 10 and 17 years. All the young people placed at the centre are referred by the Youth Justice Board.

The centre consists of three living units, a school facility, a kitchen, a sports hall/gym and administrative offices. Additional lounge areas, a music room and exterior workshop resources have recently increased the facilities available.

High walls and fencing prevent the young people from leaving the site without authorisation. All of the units have at least two communal spaces and a kitchen area. There were 17 young people resident at the time of the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an unannounced interim inspection to monitor progress since the last inspection in June 2010. All of the key standards in the staying safe outcome were looked at during this visit. No other every child matters outcomes were inspected during this visit.

The safeguarding of young people's welfare, positive appropriate relationships between staff and young people and the diffusing and diverting of negative behaviour continues to be some of the strong practice demonstrated by the centre.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made, both related to formal education at the centre. Progress against the recommendations was not assessed on this visit as education was not inspected. However, a new head of learning has been appointed along with additional higher level teaching assistants and a revised curriculum is in place.

There were no recommendations made at the last inspection which related to welfare provision at the centre. Child care practice continues to be carried out at an excellent level.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The privacy and dignity of young people at the centre is respected by staff. Privacy curtains are used at bedroom windows and staff knock on doors and announce their arrival prior to entering. Confidential information is held securely and staff are aware of with whom it can be shared.

The complaints system continues to be extremely effective. It is understood by young people and they are able to raise concerns without recourse to staff. All complaints are notified to a local authority officer who tracks the investigation and outcome to ensure the appropriate procedure is followed. A grumbles book is also available which young people can use to raise minor issues. Staff at the centre are very good at addressing some of the issues raised and resolving these to a satisfactory outcome for the young people, without the need for the formal complaints structure to be accessed. Independent advocacy services are available to the young people who have unrestricted access to the visitors on a weekly basis. The complaints procedure and systems ensure that young people can raise any concerns and be confident that they will be addressed.

There is a robust and effective child protection and safeguarding process in place. Good relationships exist with local child protection services and advice is sought on a regular basis. Any concerns raised by young people or allegations are referred appropriately. Details of any referrals are recorded comprehensively and clearly. All staff at the centre undertake safeguarding training along with refresher sessions on the internal procedures. Clear written procedures and a policy are available to guide staff practice. The welfare of young people is promoted and appropriate responses are made to any allegation.

A zero tolerance anti bullying approach is taken. All young people are made aware that any incidence of bullying will not be tolerated. There is a detailed anti bullying policy and work is carried out with young people on an individual and group basis. Staff members receive training in a range of bullying related issues and practice. A comprehensive assessment is undertaken on all young people when they are admitted to the centre and information from this is used to identify anyone who may be at risk of harming themselves, or who may be a risk to others. Effective systems are in place to offer support to those young people who may require it.

Behaviour management strategies are highly effective. Young people are encouraged to display acceptable behaviour by the use of an incentive scheme. The scheme was reviewed in July 2010 and now enables those young people who have shown

sustained positive behaviour to gain additional rewards. The use of sanctions is minimal and when used they are used appropriately. On many occasions reparation or mediation is used in preference to a sanction. This practice enables staff to successfully encourage positive responses from young people. At the time of inspection the centre was a calm, settled and welcoming environment.

The number of restraints occurring continue to be extremely low. A restraint minimisation policy is available which has recently been reviewed in conjunction with the Youth Justice Board. Staff members are able to demonstrate some outstanding professional relationships the with young people, which are used competently to avoid triggering negative behaviours. Boundaries and expectations of behaviour are made clear to the young people. Separation of young people from the group is undertaken sparingly. All occurrences are recorded fully including evidence of appropriate monitoring. There was an increase in recorded separations in September 2010, this was due to implementation of an agreed reintegration plan for two young people. All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint, the emotional well-being of young people and diversion and diffusion techniques. This helps them to effectively engage and motivate young people.

Comprehensive recordings of all behaviour management occurrences are held. Records are well maintained and of good quality. Regular audits of the recordings are undertaken both by managers at the centre and externally by Regulation 33 visitors. Every incident record is audited by the manager and a senior staff member.

Appropriate and effective procedures along with guidance for staff are in place should any young person go missing without authority. There are well planned reintegration packages to manage young people when they return to the centre. A working group is also now in operation which carries out full risk assessments and provides contingency plans for all young people who may be undertaking social mobility.

Health and safety requirements at the centre are addressed robustly. There are comprehensive risk assessments along with well embedded fire procedures. Tests of equipment and drills are undertaken regularly and a detailed record held. Staff are trained in safety and security practice and short refresher training sessions are undertaken during staff meetings.

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 not judged.