

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC379123
Inspection date	07/09/2011
Inspector	Martha Nethaway
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	01/12/2010
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: 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.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the *Inspections of children's homes – framework for inspection* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home offers placements for up to five young people who may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The service is designed to offer medium to long-term care placements. The home's programme of care incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs.

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The home provides personalised care which takes full account of the individual needs of each young person and promotes positive outcomes for all young people.

The views of young people about the quality of care in the home are regularly sought through key worker meetings, reviews, house meetings and in the day to day interaction with staff. The quality of the relationships between staff and young people in the home are good. Young people's self-esteem is promoted because there is an environment of self-discovery where they are beginning to identify their strengths and abilities.

Young people are safe and feel safe because of the high levels of staffing and supervision. This is underpinned by the staff's knowledge-base, thorough training and adopting best practice and supervision which are a key priority of the organisation.

As a result of this visit, two areas of improvement have been identified. One relates to improving the auditing of medication records. The second relates to developing a development plan for the home. Both these are administrative areas for improvement and do not adversely affect the continued good outcomes that young people are achieving.

Areas for improvementStatutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
21	ensure a written record is kept of the administration of any	31/10/2011

(2001)	medication to any child (Regulation 21 (2)(c))	
--------	--	--

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the home has a written development plan. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for children and young people are **good**.

Young people are beginning to develop a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background and confidence in their skills. Young people are provided with a safe, nurturing environment which promotes their personal development, independence and autonomy.

Young people's health including their physical, emotional, and psychological health needs are being actively promoted. For example, all young people are registered with a doctor, optician and dentist. Young people are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This includes health education activities, such as walking and using the gym. One young person commented: 'I like using the conservatory because there is gym equipment and it helps to keep me fit.' Young people are discouraged from smoking and staff clearly explain that it is bad for their health. Young people's medication is stored safely and is safely administered. However, the written records are not regularly audited because there were the occasional gaps with staff signatures. This has the potential to compromise record keeping.

All young people are attending school or about to be enrolled at school. Some young people have experienced disruption in their education. Young people's education is supported by dedicated teaching staff. This results in young people receiving good support to face the barriers to their success in their education. Staff help young people to understand that their education is a high priority and this is planned for in their care plans.

Young people are helped to make a positive contribution to their home and the wider community. For example, young people are involved in self-help groups. This offers a problem solving approach which means that young people are putting into practice the strategies they have learnt. As a result, young people improve their skills to cope with and manage their own problems. This helps to lead to improved outcomes for young people's wellbeing.

Young people are benefiting from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. This is encouraged and supported through clear

arrangements documented in the young person's placement plan. Young people's contact through personal meetings and visits are encouraged. Young people benefit from the positive contact which helps develop a proper understanding of their identity and origins. Staff prioritise the importance of family relationships and also protect young people.

Young people are being prepared for later adulthood through the preparation of doing some simple life skills, such as managing laundry, cooking and developing budgeting management skills. Incorporated in the care plans are areas related to education, training and employment. Young people benefit because they receive support for as long as they need it and are better prepared for the move towards independence.

Quality of care

The quality of the care is **good**.

Young people appreciate and have constructive relationships with staff and with each other and behave appropriately. Young people learn about how to behave in ways that are acceptable. Staff encourage, praise and reward good behaviour.

Young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home. Young people's involvement is promoted through regular house meetings. Although for a time young people were reluctant to be involved, the staff has successfully captured their engagement through these meetings. Young people now openly discuss activities and the routines of the home. Staff help young people to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases.

Young people understand how to make a complaint. Young people have been successfully supported in making complaints. This demonstrates that young people feel confident with raising complaints to a trusted member of staff. The senior management team ensure that problems are resolved quickly and efficiently which is at the heart of the home's complaints targets.

Young people are cared for in line with their individual placement plan. The contribution of the home to those plans is of good quality and involves young people and people who are significant to them. This helps to create a sound platform for stability and safety of young people for their development and growth. For example, the home has a formal assessment process to gauge young people's coping strategies. From this the staff effectively implement care plans that helps to improve each young person quality of life and wellbeing. This holistic approach means that young people's physical, social and development needs are being promoted and addressed.

The home provides a healthy environment where young people are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. One of the unique features of the home is that young

people have direct access to psychotherapists and family workers depending on their needs. The Registered Manager commented, 'The home meets one of its key aims which is to match the needs of the young people to the type of therapy which best suits their individual needs.'

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people and engaging with their schools. Young people receive good support to realise their educational potential. This includes specialist input from dedicated teaching staff and support staff who assess young people's educational needs in order for them to attend their local school. Most of the young people are about to attend a new school.

Young people are encouraged to participate in a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. For example, young people have the opportunity to do gym, gardening, cooking, walking, football and board games. One young person commented: 'I regularly go for long walks and this evening I probably did about three miles.'

Needs relating to the child's cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in both daily living and care planning. Addressing national identity, cultural background and family heritage are firmly embedded in the day to day care planning. The inclusive approach by staff ensures equal access for all young people to all services and therapeutic resources.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Since the last inspection, decorating including painting and renewal of carpets has taken place. As a result, young people are living in a comfortable and well maintained environment. One young person explained: 'It's a nice comfortable home to live in.'

Safeguarding children and young people

The service is **good** at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe.

Young people are safe and feel safe. Young people are provided with an environment where they feel secure, safe and protected from harm. The home offers an environment of inclusion, collaboration and understanding which helps to improve young people's quality of life.

Generally, young people rarely go missing. Young people who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.

Young people's positive behaviour is promoted, and restraint is rarely used. Staff encourage young people to behave in ways that are acceptable. Staff are setting appropriate boundaries around behaviour. Young people regularly receive verbal praise. Rewards such as token stickers are used which are later calculated to represent additional activities or special events. This increases young people's ability to display desirable behaviours. As a result, young people are beginning to develop a sense of personal responsibility which allows them to develop a more mature outlook.

Staff working with young people in the home are carefully selected and vetted. The home has good procedures in place to ensure that staff working at the home are suited to the task. Young people know and understand that there is a culture of being listened to and engaging and seeking their views at the home. The promotion of young people's welfare and the protection from harm is well communicated to young people by staff and senior management.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of young people cared for. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the home is operating effective health and safety procedures. For example, staff receive training on health and safety legislation and good practice. All young people are provided with personalised risk assessments that help staff to accurately assess young people's level of need and areas of vulnerability. Young people are additionally protected because they have opportunities to participate in fire evacuations so that they are aware of the correct steps to take in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the children's home are **good**.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The management team are committed, dynamic and understand and deliver the goals of the home. The Registered Manager's leadership qualities provide clear direction and operational oversight of the home. Staff benefit because the Registered Manager sets the pace through his expectations and example. The home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider.

The home demonstrates capacity for continual improvement, based on its track record and performance since its previous inspection. The home is investing in staff training and young people's education.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose of providing a home where young people's immediate needs are met by professionally, caring and specifically trained staff. As a result, this makes a positive contribution to the lives of young people. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. This is because information is updated annually and all parties are being kept informed.

The registered person actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided, including consultation with children and young people about their welfare. Young people are well informed that they are entitled to good quality care and they are actively involved in the decisions about their day to day care. This is evidenced by the level of good engagement with key workers and young people. Young people are beginning to maximise the positive affects of the intensive staff support and supervision.

The management team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and have development plans in place. However, the current annual development review is at a strategic operational level and does not relate to the day to day operation of the home. This results in staff not being provided with an opportunity to contribute to the home's further development. Similarly, young people are not involved in defining outcomes and setting standards.

The home employs a sufficient number of staff, who are appropriately trained and effectively supervised and supported. Staff are supported and guided to fulfil their roles and provide a good quality service to young people. One member of staff commented: 'I receive supervision every month which is recorded. It's really useful and I am still learning and the company does give you feedback about your performance.'

Staff receive good quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep up-to-date with professional and legal developments. For example, in-service key worker training, mental health needs and positive parenting training.

Young people's records are clear, up to date and stored securely and contribute to an understanding of the child's life. As a result, young people's records assist with tracking progress and supports communication about the shared decision making between young people, staff, families and social workers.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident. The consequence of this is that young people's welfare is being actively promoted at all times.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.