

## Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC425985
<b>Inspection date</b>	16/04/2013
<b>Inspector</b>	Sonya Robinson
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	14/01/2013
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2013

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a national organisation. It offers accommodation for seven children and young people who experience autistic spectrum disorder and a possible learning disability. Young people who access the service attend the organisation's school.

Placements in the home are generally provided during term time, with accommodation being provided on weekdays. Periods of short-break care are agreed on an individual basis. Children and young people who access this service can be aged between 5 and 19 years.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

**Adequate:** a service that only meets minimum requirements

**Inadequate:** a service that does not meet minimum requirements

## Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are thriving as they live in an supportive, caring and nurturing environment which enables them to make good progress. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff which are built upon honesty and trust. The home is making a positive difference to young people's lives and provides them with the tools and opportunities to achieve positive outcomes. This is echoed by social workers and parents who comment upon the 'excellent' care and support provided.

Staff are committed and have a good understanding of each young person's specific and complex needs. Care planning is personalised and allows the uniqueness of each young person to shine. Staff have high, but realistic, aspirations for young people and work effectively to promote their growth and social and emotional development. Consequently, young people feel safe and are much more able to handle difficult and challenging situations.

Young people's views are very important to what the home does. Their views are sought by staff through various formats such as discussion with young people and their parents, through various communication systems.

The Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provide clear insight into the type of care and support each young person can expect to receive. Outcomes for young people, quality of care and safeguarding young people is good. The home is managed adequately and as such this has impacted on the overall rating of this home. One-to-one formal supervision for the manager, further staff completing an appropriate childcare qualification, monitoring of records to make sure they are up-to-date, external monitoring reports not being consistently sent to Ofsted are highlighted within this inspection. However, these issues do not impact upon the care provided to young people.

## Areas for improvement

### Statutory 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
33 (2001)	ensure a copy of the monthly Regulation 33 report is supplied to HMCI. (Regulation 33 (5)(a))	31/05/2013

### Recommendations

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

- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed (NMS 22.1)
- ensure records and documents are clearly recorded and in a way which will be helpful to children in the future when they access files; such as key worker records (NMS 22.5)
- ensure that suitable arrangements exist for professional supervision of the registered manager (NMS 19.3)
- ensure that the registered person takes action to address any issues of concern that they, the Regulation 33 visitor, identify or which is raised with them (NMS 21.9)
- ensure that there is a written development plan, reviewed annually for the future of the home (NMS 15.2)
- ensure that all existing care staff have attained a minimum level 3 qualification. This was previously the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People and from September 2010 is the Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma. (NMS 18.5)

## Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are happy and settled during their stay in the home. They enjoy positive relationships with staff which are built upon trust. Social workers say, young people receive 'very good support and fantastic care', which enables them to feel settled and to engage with staff. Young people are growing in confidence and self-esteem. This means they are more able to engage with staff and the opportunities around them.

Young people are developing a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are enabled to make informed choices about what they wish to eat. Young people work with staff to achieve a healthy lifestyle along with taking regular exercise such as jogging, swimming and climbing. Staff are attentive to the specific dietary needs of young people. They purchase specific items for individual young people as part of their cultural diet. Young people are encouraged to try new foods to broaden their dietary repertoire. Although, some young people remain really pleased when 'take out' is on the menu.

Young people's attendance at school is excellent. They are taken each morning by their staff to the organisation's own school. This effective and smooth transition is achieved because of the clear routines in place, which enables young people to prepare for the school day. School staff are complimentary about the home and their input into supporting young people's education.

Young people are actively encouraged to develop independence skills in line with the age, ability and level of understanding. They regularly set the table, and are developing good personal hygiene skills. For example, some have moved on from needing support to clean their teeth to doing this independently. They enjoy the opportunities to go shopping, to purchase various items and to eat out with staff at their favourite food outlet.

Consultation with young people is good, although key worker reports are not consistently written up. Their views are sought on activities, menus and the decoration of their bedrooms. Staff go out of their way to support young people's choices and to ensure they have items around them that are important to them. Young people's bedrooms reflect their interests and they are regularly encouraged to further personalise them.

Contact with families is extremely well supported. Families enjoy positive relationships with staff and are confident to contact them throughout the day to discuss their child with them. They are carefully consulted and included in all aspects of their child's care. Their views are highly respected and valued and are as far as possible acted upon. Social workers say the home provides excellent support to families, they keep in regular contact which means families are reassured that their child is safe and well during their stay.

## Quality of care

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

Young people experience a genuinely caring and secure relationship with staff. This is validated in the positive regard young people hold towards the staff supporting them and is equally ratified by professionals and parents who have involvement with the home. Parents have said 'we are very happy with the service', 'the staff are fantastic and dedicated' and 'it is reassuring to know that that we can rest, knowing that our child is well cared for.' Staff ensure that meals reflect the heritage and personal preferences of young people. This includes young people being actively involved in writing shopping lists and, with support, going to the supermarkets to purchase food for their stay. Care planning embraces equality and diversity issues. This includes recognising young people's identity and formatting responses to these needs, that are then brought into everyday care. For example, respect of identity extends to young people making informed choices over their diet and enjoyment of cultural festivals.

The home is appropriately located to help young people to build social networks that promote a sense of belonging and identity. Young people are able to express their views and wishes regarding family relationships and contact. This is always respected by staff. Equally, young people's care plans reflect their needs for stability and protection.

The arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effectively managed to ensure young people receive medication important to their health. Health plans, like care plans, are tailored to individual needs. The home has developed sufficient diverse resources that help young people engage in understanding their health needs and to be supported to access services that improve health and well-being.

The learning and development opportunities offered to young people assist them in develop self-esteem. For example, young people have a positive self-image from being able to learn skills, such as personal care. Furthermore, staff are linked to the school and school support staff work in the home to help provide stability and continuity.

The rapport between young people and staff is very good. This level of trust means young people's feelings are continuously respected and they can influence decisions over the running of the home. There are systems in place so that young people know how to make a complaint. Young people are consulted daily on what they would like to do, for some this may be watching their favourite television programme, playing on their games console, going to the shops or horse riding. This means that young people enjoy a wide and varied programme of activities based upon their specific interests.

## Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff work effectively with parents and the safeguarding agencies to promote young people's safety. Safe caring practices ensure that young people feel safe and are protected from harm. This provides reassurances to parents while young people stay at the home. Staff understand their responsibility to protect young people and are well trained in child protection, including issues in relation to children's personal circumstances and learning disabilities.

Young people's individual plans identify risks they may face and outline strategies to ensure their welfare is promoted and protected. The plans for young people's safety are put into practice and address their needs and circumstances. Staff are very knowledgeable about the young people's particular vulnerabilities relating to their level of understanding and disability. This enables them to ensure children are safe at home and in the community. Staff balance the need for protection with enabling children to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. For example, children are always suitably supervised and any activities in the community are carefully planned.

All safety precautions are put into place, including adjustments to the physical environment or the use electronic monitoring, are based on careful risk assessments of individual needs, and allow children and young people as much freedom as possible consistent with the need to keep them safe.

Young people's behaviour is good and they do not engage in behaviour that may place them in risk of harm. They do not experience bullying or harassment. They get on well together most of the time and staff effectively deal with the rare occasions when children fall out. Staff have a very good understanding of the times and factors that contribute to young people becoming upset. This includes working with the school and parents to develop consistent and well thought out behaviour management strategies that reduce young people's anxieties and frustrations; for example using favourite toys as a distraction. The focus of these strategies is on praising positive behaviour and staff put them into practice effectively to support young people.

Staff have a very good awareness of the effects of individual young people's disability on their social and emotional development and behaviour. Staff work effectively and sensitively with young people to manage their behaviour constructively and reduce their level of anxiety. This may be as simple as explaining to young people what is happening and what they are going to do next; or providing them with regular experiences in the community to reduce their fears about being away from home.

Children and young people live in a physically safe environment that promotes their health and well-being. They are protected from any hazards by a range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff carry out regular

health and safety checks, including hot water temperatures, annual checks on electrical and gas safety, and fire drills with children to ensure the premises are safe and children know what to do in case of an emergency.

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough to make sure children are protected. The manager carefully ensures that staff have the skills and competencies to meet the needs of individual children. Also there are suitable systems in place to ensure that visitors to the home are suitably checked and supervised to protect children.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She has created a child-focused and safe environment where young people are actively encouraged to express their wishes and feelings. The manager and staff clearly demonstrate a commitment to delivering good childcare practice tailored to the personal needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the good progress young people have made. However, there are weaknesses in relation to regular formal staff supervision for the manager, the business development plan is out of date and the record keeping is not consistently monitored.

Young people are looked after by very caring and skilled staff. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people. This includes the support they need for activities, visits and attending appointments. However, not all staff have an appropriate qualification in childcare. The manager works hard to ensure that the deployment of staff provides consistency for young people. The home also has deputy in place with a view to assisting the manager in the running of the home, who has very recently started.

Staff are well supported by the manager. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the expectations for providing good childcare practice. They confirm that when they need support and guidance, the manager is always available and helpful. They have regular one-to-one formal supervision and their performance is appraised on an annual basis. This allows staff the opportunity to regularly reflect, with a manager, on their practice, performance and development, and young people's progress. There is also a rolling programme of training for staff to further develop their skills and knowledge.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide are shared with young people, their families and placing authorities. These are well written are accessible to all and provide a clear picture of the home's aims and objectives. This means placing authorities, young people and their families are well aware of the care and support young people can expect to receive.

The manager and provider routinely monitor the running of the home. As a result they understand the strengths of the home and the areas for improvement.



However, monthly reports undertaken by the independent visitor of the home on behalf of the provider as not consistently being sent to Ofsted and where they identify action to be taken this is not always acted upon, such as supervision for the manager and practical changes to daily routines.

Since the last inspection the refurbishment of the home has been completed which was highlighted at the last interim inspection in January 2013. There are systems in place to notify relevant people if significant events occur within the home.

Young people's written records are securely stored and provide a detailed picture of young people's progress and experiences. The records generally provide a good narrative for young people's daily lives, observations about young people's mood and behaviour and analysis of the day's events.

## 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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.