

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033152
Inspection date	12/09/2013
Inspector	Lynne Busby
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	13/02/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2013

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.

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is a young people's home run by a local authority. The home is registered to provide a service for up to six young people, who have a learning disability and may also have a physical disability.

The home offers a short-term respite service only; no one is accommodated on a long-term basis and one of the six places is used only for emergency short breaks.

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 **outstanding**.

Young people who stay at the home benefit by making significant progress. They enjoy their stay and develop friendships and gain confidence and develop their self-esteem. Care is consistently excellent and care plans are tailored to meet individual needs. Staff are competent and experienced and provide a warm nurturing environment.

Young people enjoy extremely positive relationships with staff. Young people say they like coming to stay at the home. Parents say 'this is a fantastic service, staff know the young people very well and the care is excellent'.

Young people's views are central to the home and regardless of a young person's communication style, considerable opportunities are provided for their views to be sought and acted upon. Young people have a range of activities including those in the wider community which they can choose from. Many of these experiences significantly enhance their social and emotional skills and are inclusive.

There is a multi-agency approach to the care of young people. The staff work closely with colleagues in education and health to enhance opportunities for young people to achieve and have their health needs fully met. In addition, they work in partnership with parents who say they are fully part of the decision making process.

The manager and staff have an improvement agenda where they continually strive to develop the service to ensure young people have the best opportunities to improve their outcomes. The ethos of the home is that young people are treated as individuals, with respect and their preferred form of communication is used to seek their views. This approach values the diverse needs of young people and celebrates difference.

The inspection identifies two recommendations regarding consistent recording of complaints and staff training records.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed, taking into account complaints records (NMS 22.1)
- ensure the learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and if necessary is updated (18.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people are making exceptional progress in developing their self-view and emotional resilience. This is developed through staff providing young people with access to a wide range of experiences that expand their horizons. Staff work hard to match young people when planning their short-break. This also includes friendship groups and those who are at the same school, this helps sustain relationships and they have opportunities to develop friendships with others.

Parents are extremely positive about the home and how their children have been supported to develop and grow. One parent said 'The support staff are very good and make sure that they know (name) needs and likes to ensure his stay is enjoyable for him. (Name) tells me that he likes all the staff. He also likes the range of activities available and the opportunity to meet his friends away from school. Staff are always helpful'. This comment sums up parents views. Parents can contact the home at any time during the young person's visit and are always welcomed. The staff have supported parents to start a parents group which are now meeting on a regular basis. This initiative helps support both young people and parents.

Young people's health needs are very well met. Staff work closely with health professionals who say 'there has been further improvement with the change in individualised care planning and the work to have an integrated health plan across all

services. This continues to be an excellent service that has a massive impact of young people's lives'. Risk assessments support care plans and identify areas such as epilepsy and moving and handling.

Young people are provided with well-balanced nutritious meals and they are encouraged to make healthy choices. For those young people who have a restricted diet staff provide them with opportunities to tolerate, touch and taste different foods. The progress may take time but there have been real achievements in young people expanding their food groups. Older young people are given opportunities to prepare their own meals, keep their rooms tidy and pay for items when out shopping with staff, optimising their independence and promoting life-skills.

There is excellent liaison with school which ensures a consistent approach to learning. Young people are supported to achieve their personal goals. Good practice is shared such as behaviour management, communication and choice making. Education staff say 'the staff have an holistic approach to care needs'. Staff celebrate the achievements young people make and this is shared with the schools and parents through the home school communication book.

Quality of care

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

Young people significantly benefit from their stay at the home. Staff have a child-centred approach to the young people which enables them to promote and support individual needs. Young people have formed relaxed and trusting relationships with the staff.

Young people benefit from staff who actively support education; they have excellent communication with the schools the young people attend. Staff have access to the statement of educational needs and individual education plans for each young person and attend meeting and reviews. This ensures that where possible they can promote learning opportunities within the home.

The care plans have been reviewed and are now designed to meet specific needs. They are extremely individualised and incorporate day and night time routines. There are also risk assessments which clearly identify specific areas of need. These are regularly updated which reflects the changing needs of young people. The plans have clear measurable targets and staff are realistic in what young people can achieve. Plans are inclusive and the staff have introduced a pictorial element for both plans and reports which show when young people have achieved the targets that have been set.

Young people benefit from a memory book which staff help them put together of their time at the home. Young people take the books with them when they move on to adulthood.

Staff prepare young people's care and accommodation extremely well. There is a

'prepare the building' plan before each young person arrives. For example, some young people do not like the clock as it makes them very anxious, other young people like specific items in their rooms. These excellent practices ensure young people settle well when they come to stay. In addition, staff have a good understanding of the young people and plan activities which they can choose from.

Young people views are continually sought regarding the day-to day running of the home and about their care. There are a range of ways for young people with communication difficulties to make their wishes and feelings known, including making a complaint. These include a grumbles book, a worry tree and a child-friendly complaints form and the availability of different adults including an independent advocate. This layering of ways to communicate offer all young people a chance to give their view's regardless of their communication style and enhances the safeguarding mechanisms in place.

Young people benefit from a wide range of activities that are well planned taking into account what young people like to do such as going to the cinema, bowling, arts and crafts and trips out to the sea side and a place where they can drive diggers. The home also has a number of resources such as story bags and sensory poems which they use with individual young people. The home has a sensory room which some young people enjoy using; this includes cushions with faces showing emotion that gives them an opportunity to indicate how they are feeling. The outside play area within the grounds of the home offers young people a range of specialised play equipment to enjoy, which they helped choose. These activities enhance young people's life experiences and builds confidence and promotes friendships with other young people.

The home is well decorated and maintained. It offers communal space with a lounge and a sensory room where young people can relax. All young people have their own room and they can bring things from home to personalise their space during their stay.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safeguarded because this is the prime focus of staff. They have an excellent understanding of their responsibilities to protect young people from harm and are appropriately trained. Staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child, this includes the whistle blowing process and they are confident in reporting any issues.

Young people have complex needs and are vulnerable and some have limited awareness of danger. Staff know young people very well and have developed an expertise in communication. This assists staff in recognising possible safeguarding situations involving young people. Bullying is not an issue in the home, although staff are aware when this may occur and there is good supervision of young people. Staff

do talk to young people about bullying. A strength is in the matching of young people who stay at the home to ensure compatibility and develop friendships which reduces bullying.

Young people never go missing because of excellent supervision and staff vigilance. Staff are aware of what action to take should this occur and there are clear protocols and procedures in place.

Individual behaviour management strategies are consistently applied allowing young people to develop an understanding between positive and unacceptable behaviours. Staff are skilful in using distraction techniques which helps young people refocus their attention. Therefore, restraint is rarely used and is mainly used to guide young people away from situations. Sanctions are used sparingly as positive behaviour is promoted.

The safety and well-being of young people is enhanced by the robust selection and recruitment process. This ensures only staff who are suitable to work young people are appointed. Visitors to the home are checked and supervised where necessary to safeguard young people.

Young people stay in a home that is very well maintained. Regular and exhaustive checks are completed on gas, electrical and fire safety equipment to ensure they remain in good working order. Fire checks and evacuations are regularly undertaken. There is a system in place to check all young people have an opportunity to be involved in a fire evacuation. This ensures they are familiar with the noise of the alarm and action taken in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed by a well-qualified and competent manager. The staff group are committed and enthusiastic and want the young people to have a positive, enjoyable experience when they stay at the home. The manager is clearly aware of the strengths and areas for improvement of the home and this is reflected in a development plan that is regularly reviewed.

Young people are supported by good levels of staffing which contributes to their safety. Staff are well supported through supervision, annual appraisals and regular staff meetings. This gives staff opportunities to discuss career and practice issues. Staff say there are good opportunities to attend training including specialised training such as epilepsy and child protection and domestic violence. There is a matrix of all staff's learning and development. However, this has not been evaluated fully to ensure it is effective. The recommendation from the last inspection regarding all staff, including night staff being appropriately qualified has been completed. This ensures all staff have the skills and understanding to meet the individual needs of the young people.

The home is operating in line with a comprehensive Statement of Purpose which has been recently updated. There is an excellent young people's guide which is pictorial and personalised to each child who attends. This allows young people and parents to have an understanding of the care they will receive.

The home is visited monthly as part of the quality assurance process. The report has been reviewed and is more in-depth and evaluative and contributes to the continuous improvement of the home. In addition, the manager monitors all records kept in the home to identify any trends and patterns and address any areas of concern.

The standard of record keeping overall is good with well-developed files where information can be easily found gives a clear history of the young person's progress. In addition, they keep appropriate memorabilia of young people's time at the home. The majority of records are well kept. There was one complaint from a child which had been not recorded in the complaints log. This was resolved appropriately but the lack of information in the complaints record was not seen during the monitoring process, therefore the quality and adequacy of record keeping could not assessed.

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.