

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005048
Inspection date	08/11/2013
Inspector	Pete Hylton
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	07/11/2012
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for eight young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

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**.

The home provides an excellent standard of care to children. Highly individualised care planning ensures children's needs are fully met. Their individual preferences, wishes, cultural and emotional needs are met at all times. As a result, all children make excellent progress in all areas of their lives.

Children enjoy living at the home. They have highly positive views about the standard of their care and their experiences. All children lead active, healthy and happy lifestyles. They thrive in the nurturing environment created by the caring, dedicated and enthusiastic staff team. A child commented that 'it is really good here because you can play.'

Relationships between children and staff are excellent and a key feature of the home. Children benefit from strong attachments with the stable staff team. This supports their emotional security and provides children with an environment where they are happy, safe and receive consistent care.

Children are safe and feel safe at the home. All required health and safety checks are fully up to date. Children know how to raise concerns and serious incidents are rare at the home. Incidents of challenging behaviour are similarly rare and where they do occur are brief and exceptionally well-managed.

The leadership and management of the home are excellent. The Registered Manager supports a staff team who are fully committed to providing excellent care. Clear development plans are in place for the home and the whole staff team are

committed to further improvement. The Registered Manager regularly reviews the service given to children. Areas for further development are rigorously addressed and improvements are effectively implemented.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The progress that children make is excellent. All children are engaged in the on-site school and in relation to their starting points are making excellent progress. Where children have experienced disrupted educational histories prior to living at the home, they are now settled, engaged and making significant progress. This is because they thrive in the home's positive routines and know what is expected of them. As a result, children quickly settle at the home, make friends with their peers and develop and maintain excellent attendance and attainment.

Children make significant progress in reducing their anti-social behaviours. They learn how to manage their emotions and develop an excellent understanding of how their behaviour can impact on others. This results in children developing key skills in living harmoniously with their peers in the home. Children are respectful to each other and develop close relationships with each other in the home. As a result, they learn tolerance, acceptance and genuinely enjoy living at the home. They enjoy spending time playing games, exploring the extensive grounds and going out on regular trips in the local and wider community. A child commented that 'there's loads of stuff to do.'

Children develop their emotional resilience and knowledge of their heritage and backgrounds. They are supported with recording and celebrating key events. Life story work is centred on the experiences of children and ensures that they see the positivity in their lives. This results in children realising their potential and recognising that they are making excellent progress. This is further underpinned by the home environment celebrating the achievements of children. Their art work and photographs of children completing various activities are proudly displayed around the home.

Children make excellent progress with regards to their health. All children eat well, have positive sleep routines and lead extremely active lifestyles. As a result, children are supported in their physical development. A social worker commented that a child 'arrived with complex health needs which have been reduced through the care received.'

Quality of care

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

The home is well presented and provides a warm, comfortable and stimulating environment for children. They enjoy playing in the home and have a wide range of

toys, games and activities to stimulate their interests. The home provides a fun environment where children enjoy spending time with staff and each other.

Children are supported in making excellent progress in all areas of their lives by a stable, committed and caring staff team. There is genuine warmth in the relationships between staff and children. It is evident that children value their attachments with the whole staff team. This leads to an environment that is non-institutionalised and family orientated. A social worker commented that 'children are relaxed but respectful to staff.' There is a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and nurturing in the home.

Food provided to children is balanced, nutritious and healthy. A dedicated cook ensures that the choices of children are reflected in a varied menu. Meal times are a social occasion where staff and children sit together and enjoy talking about their experiences and plans. The staff team encourage a social atmosphere in the home where all children know that they are important and that their contribution is valued. Children make significant progress in developing their social confidence, manners and tolerance of others. As a result, a calm and homely environment is maintained at all times.

Complaints from children are rare. Where they do occur, they are swiftly addressed and sensitively resolved. As a result, children know that their concerns are taken seriously and acted upon with rigour. The home has produced an excellent children's guide. This has been written specifically for the age-range of the children in the home. It explains the home's routines, expectations and how to raise any issues. Furthermore, a range of contact details, including Ofsted and the Children's Rights Director, are promoted in the guide and around the home. Children are able to contact external services of support using the freely available telephone.

Children's care plans are clear, comprehensive and regularly reviewed and updated. This ensures that the care provided to children is relevant to their needs and in agreement with placing authorities. This is further underpinned through the staff team ensuring that the views, wishes and preferences of children are explored and acted upon. As a result, care plans are highly individualised and focused on meeting the needs of the children. Furthermore, the diverse needs of children are promoted in the home. Where children have specific cultural needs, for example with regards to religion, the staff team ensure that provision is made. This ensures that children can develop and maintain their spirituality and sense of personal identity.

All children have excellent attendance at the on-site school. Excellent relationships between care and education staff ensures that any concerns are openly discussed and collectively addressed. A teacher commented that they 'regularly review educational and care targets with the child, the keyworker and education staff.' This ensures that children make progress with their academic studies and their wider developmental needs.

The staff team ensure that any barriers to children reaching their full potential are identified and resolved. For example, where children indicate that they are unhappy

about their relationship with an external service, the staff team advocate for the child. This ensures that the views of children are heard outside of the home and that their wishes are actively promoted.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Restraint is used only where necessary and only for the purpose of keeping young people safe from harm. Detailed recording ensures that all required information is carefully recorded. Appropriate sanctions are used to discourage socially unacceptable behaviours. The Registered Manager regularly reviews the use of these measures and ensures that any concerns are identified and resolved. For example, if a child continues to display a pattern of behaviour, a review is held to identify more appropriate strategies to support the child. This results in an environment where children make significant progress in developing positive behaviour and value the progress that they make. A social worker commented that there is 'effective reinforcement of positive behaviour.' Furthermore, consistent care is provided by the care staff and the on-site school teaching staff. This results in children receiving clear and consistent routines and boundaries. A teacher commented that children make 'vast improvements with their behaviour.'

Incidents of children going missing are extremely rare. Where they do occur, they are quickly resolved and the staff team ensure that all appropriate actions are taken. Effective protocols are in place with the local police. Furthermore, individualised risk management plans are in place for all children. As a result, children receive care that is based on their identified vulnerabilities. This promotes a safe environment where children are protected from harm.

Children are safe and feel safe in the home. They know how to raise their concerns and have access to a range of support services should they wish to complain. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and high staffing levels ensure that children are monitored at all times. Staff have a robust understanding of how to keep children safe. Highly detailed records of children's progress ensures that any concerns are recorded. Effective relationships with placing authorities ensure that this information is shared and acted upon.

The safety of children is at the heart of staff practice. Regular fire drills ensure that all children know how to evacuate the home in the event of fire. This is further enhanced through fire drills taking place at different times of the day, including in darkness and evening times. All required checks are in place for electrical and gas installations. Regular checks of the physical environment ensure that any defects are identified and swiftly resolved. The staff team are skilled in maintaining the home environment.

All persons working in the home are appropriately vetted prior to their employment starting. All required checks are made and up-to-date records are kept in the home.

As a result, children do not come into contact with adults who may wish to cause them harm. Visitors to the home are appropriately checked and where necessary chaperoned. This ensures that children live in an environment where their safety is promoted at all times.

Leadership and management

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

The home was last inspected in November 2012 and was judged to be making good progress. Two recommendations were made. These related to the condition of the home and the provision of additional recreational areas and activities. The Registered Manager has ensured that the required improvements have been made. As a result, young people benefit from a home that is now better maintained and presented. Furthermore, additional play equipment and an increase in off-site activities ensure that young people enjoy a broad and stimulating range of activities.

The Registered Manager ensures that the home is exceptionally well managed. Regular and rigorous checks of the home ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times. The home's development plan is regularly updated and makes clear what improvements are going to be made over the coming months. There is demonstrable positive impact as a result of these plans. For example, bedroom furniture has been replaced with modern, colourful wardrobes. Children benefit because they see that the staff team are committed to providing an extremely homely environment.

Clear policies and procedures are embedded in the home. The staff team are well organised, extremely competent in their duties and are very focused on meeting the needs of children. All records relating to children are regularly updated and securely stored. As a result, children's progress is effectively recorded and their confidentiality is promoted at all times. Furthermore, excellent quality assurance processes ensures that regular audits of files and records identify any weaknesses or areas for further development. This is further enhanced through high quality monitoring from within the organisation. Regular visits ensure that the quality of care is regularly evaluated and the views of children actively sought. Reports from these visits are used by the Registered Manager to further drive improvement in the home.

The Registered Manager leads a staff team who are committed to providing excellent levels of care to children. The staff are enthusiastic, motivated and energetic. This results in an environment where children thrive and enjoy busy and active lives. All staff are appropriately trained in restraint, fire safety, child protection and other required areas of care practice. Furthermore, a diverse and settled staff team ensures that stability is at the core of the care provided to children.

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.