

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC039900
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Council House, Mary Stevens Park STOURBRIDGE West Midlands DY8 2AA
Responsible individual	Nicola Jane Prashar
Registered manager	Mark Bates
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	27/11/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are supported by a staff team that offers a high level of consistent and effective care. Planning for young people is highly personalised and staff have a strong awareness of the differing needs of the young people and respond well to these. This awareness promotes positive relationships between staff and young people and a commitment towards supporting improving outcomes.

The views of young people, their parents and professionals involved with them have an impact on the care provided. The staff are responsive to the likes and dislikes of the young people and attempt to provide an environment that is comfortable as well as enriching.

Young people have made some significant improvements in their health, wellbeing and behaviour. This has been done due to consistent staff support. Young people are protected by a range of safeguarding measures. Medication is safely stored, dispensed and recorded. A safe environment is provided for young people with very effective health and safety controls.

The management team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. They seek to improve the service wherever possible to ensure positive experiences for all young people. The staff team are strongly supported and are consistently

looking to improve the lives of the young people and create experiences for them. Some improvements in activity records are necessary to promote clearer more purposeful planning and more varied activities for young people.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority owned home provides care for up to seven children. The home can accommodate children with moderate to severe learning and/or physical disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	good progress
21/11/2013	Full	outstanding
11/03/2013	Interim	good progress
24/07/2012	Full	outstanding

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

Recommendations

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

- ensure children pursue individual interests and hobbies. This includes taking part in a range of activities, including leisure activities and trips (NMS 7.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people make some significant improvements while they are at the home. Attachments between young people and staff are of a high level, with thoughtful and professional levels of care helping to develop young people's abilities and communication skills. Staff's consistent positive regard ensures young people develop some understanding of their abilities as they are encouraged to challenge themselves and try new experiences. As a result, they develop greater skills.

Young people's health needs are responded to swiftly with huge improvements in individuals diet, and overall well-being. There is an exceptional awareness from the staff team of young people's health needs and how these can be best supported. This leads to effective links to external health support services. Attendance at school is excellent and young people are progressing, and achieving. Close links with education staff ensure consistency in social learning and behaviour management.

Some young people have decreased challenging behaviours towards themselves, the staff and others. An independent reviewing officer stated that 'family relationships are now more positive due to them being settled.' Effective and consistent behaviour management strategies, that are shared between the staff team, further enhance the decrease in problematic outbursts.

Young people's contact arrangements are fully supported and visits to the home are encouraged. This approach ensures young people can continue to build and maintain positive contact with significant people in their lives and promotes understanding of those important to them. One parent stated that the staff 'always make you feel at home, even if you are not expected.' Young people are able to make and receive calls to their families.

Planning involves close liaison with families, carers and social workers. Young people are supported to develop some life-skills during their stay at the home and staff put a lot of effort into supporting transition arrangements into placements following on from being at the home. This increases the chances of a positive move that enhances the life of the young person.

Quality of care **good**

Young people enjoy being at the home and this is examined within regular meetings promoting differing communication techniques. Relationships observed suggest that young people enjoy being with the staff team and they are cared for in a warm and nurturing way. Key workers form an integral part of young people's care and regular

meetings are completed to develop an awareness of young people's likes, dislikes and possible future planning. Meetings are occasionally repetitious and do not show development.

Staff having an excellent awareness of the needs of the young people and how these are being responded to. This is, in part, due to a well-considered synopsis of care being recorded as an update to Looked After Children placement and care plans. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis and the home provides detailed information to these meetings, highlighting the high awareness of the staff team of the care practices at the home.

Information regarding complaints is available within the home and an advocate visits on a regular basis to support young people. Complaints made to the home are rare but are well recorded and show the outcomes of investigations following concerns being raised. This helps to support the voice of children and young people and those involved with them.

Young people have their medical health care needs met well. Young people often arrive at the home presenting with some complex health problems or issues. These are assessed and responded to. The availability of psychological support and intervention assists staff to provide a holistic approach to address the emotional well-being of young people. Medication is well administered and systems for recording these are safe and well known by a trained staff team.

All young people attend special schools in the local area and the level of attendance is excellent. Young people's files contain a wealth of information regarding their education and how it is to be supported. Links between school and the home are effective and information is shared daily on pertinent issues.

The home is exceptionally well resourced with a wide range of activities for young people to be involved with. Activity planners are in place but occasionally lack detail or variation, with activities then being decided on 'depending on what the young people want to do.' This does not always promote engaging activities. All young people have enjoyed holidays away from the home and day trips where staff show a strong commitment to ensuring that these are enjoyed.

The building is spacious and well cared for. There are several separate areas for privacy, play or group interaction. The service has a homely feel with safety and accessibility in mind. Young people's rooms are well personalised and they are given choices in the way that rooms are decorated throughout the house. A similarly well-resourced garden area promotes young people getting outside and enjoying the apparatus.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people's safety at the home is promoted through well-known systems and responses to concerns. Staff have a very good understanding of how young people's previous experiences affect their behaviour and how they respond to stress. This plays a major part in managing behaviour and protecting young people from harm.

Consistent boundaries, clear expectations and kind, nurturing care provide the young people with a sense of security and good order. Staff are effective at getting to know young people and understand their specific vulnerabilities. This helps staff to plan and successfully implement highly individual behaviour management strategies. No sanctions have been used at the home since the last inspection and restraints are used in a supportive way to decrease risk to the young person involved, the staff team and other young people around them. All restraints are fully recorded both within the home's record and the young people's files to ensure they are safe following such events.

No young people have gone missing from the home. This is due to appropriate security arrangements and the high vigilance of staff in response to the vulnerabilities of the young people. Missing persons protocols are in place to further support their safety. Staff are not risk averse, but each risk is carefully assessed and young people's wishes for greater autonomy and choice are taken into account.

Rigorous recruitment checks are completed on all staff prior to them working at the home and this is checked by the registered manager prior to them starting. Recruitment includes observations of working with the young people to ensure that they are able to respond to the young people effectively. Health and safety is given a suitable priority with all required checks and tests being completed, ensuring the wellbeing of all who live and work in the home. Fire drills are carried out monthly, while the servicing and testing of fire-fighting equipment is routinely completed.

Leadership and management

good

A strong and experienced leadership team is in place. The registered manager has been in position since 2008 and is appropriately qualified. No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection, but a development plan is in place to further enhance the care provided. The senior team's monthly monitoring reflects any new areas for development in the building or the service provided. The staff team make strides to seek the views of young people and their families to consider new ways of improving the service.

The statement of purpose for the home has been updated and a new community risk assessment is in place to create an awareness of the home's role in the locality. External monitoring of the home is completed regularly with reports being received. All recommendations from these are responded to swiftly, showing the staff's enthusiasm to meet the expected standards.

Young people enjoy being cared for by a consistent and enthusiastic staff team who are well trained. The mandatory training package ensures that staff are kept up to date with changes in legislation and that staff keep young people safe. New staff benefit from an induction package which is tailored to the young people's needs. Training is also linked to annual appraisals to ensure that staff develop in their care practice.

An appropriate number of staff are available day and night to meet the needs of young people. Staff are positive about their roles and clearly care for the young people's wellbeing. All staff benefit from regular reflective supervision, which is recorded and stored securely. Regular staff meetings are completed to keep all staff up to date with on-going issues within the home and for the young people.

Records are maintained to a suitable standard and evidence the progress and development made by young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
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Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
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Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
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Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.
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Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.

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