

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	15 September 2009
Inspector	Stephen Trainor
Type of Inspection	Random

Date of last inspection	13 May 2009
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is registered for up to six young people aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for males with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Six young people were living at the home and it was possible to speak to four of them.

The house is detached and there are sufficient rooms where the young people can pursue their leisure interests and hobbies. Each young person has an individual bedroom. There is a private and secure rear garden. A large drive way to the side of the home is used for staff and visitor parking. The beach, parks, cinema, fishing ponds as well as sports and athletics facilities are a short journey from the home. Bus routes connect the home with the local community and the national rail link. Shops and supermarkets are accessible within the surrounding community.

This children's home is also registered as an independent school with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The home employs a full time teacher as well as classroom support to facilitate in-house education. Opportunities for the young people to attend different educational placements including local schools and colleges, work experience and specialist residential schools are also facilitated.

Summary

This inspection was unannounced and comments on the two outcome areas Staying Safe and Organisation. Recommendations made during the last inspection, which was an aligned inspection with education inspectors, were evaluated.

This is a outstanding children's home in every respect. Staff are properly recruited. All hold suitable qualifications and continue to gain access to ongoing training. Management support is well coordinated and staff continually develop skills and knowledge to care for the young people. Young people are thriving at the home. There are very few behaviour management problems. No concern relating to, bullying, absconding, complaints, physical intervention and sanctions was identified.

The accommodation is managed safely. Staff practice embraces equality and diversity principles throughout the range of services being provided. Quality assurance systems demonstrate that the management team are reflecting on practice to continually develop the service in line with new initiatives. The service continually provides high standards of care. Comprehensive consultation records are held and these show great satisfaction in how the service operates.

This report highlights some minor recommendations to support practice developments. No training has been provided on a new intranet system used to store policy and procedural guidance. Management and staff do not access information freely using this system at present. Policy on the vetting of and supervision of work men and contractors visiting the home is still not clear.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two of the three recommendations made at the last inspection have been suitably addressed. All staff now hold a suitable first aid qualification which means deployment of staff is fully suited on every shift. Minor medical matters can easily be responded to. The age range of young people who can be accommodated at the home has been made clear within the homes records and within Ofsted records. Work is in process to finalise guidance about building contactors who might come into contact with the young people at the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Arrangements for complaints, safeguarding children, bullying and behaviour management are handled well and ensure that young people feel listened to and protected. No concerns were highlighted throughout the course of this inspection. These findings are consistent with other inspections including an aligned inspection in June 2009 with Ofsted education inspectors. High standards continue to be maintained.

Accurate records are produced confirming the home is managed well. Suitable physical safety and security is afforded for the young people resident. The management team has established excellent operational systems. All the young people present at this inspection were happy and settled. Individual personalities have been enabled to prosper at this home. No safeguarding concerns relating to absconding are evident and no young people have needed to be physically restrained. The residents have an appreciation of and respect for their peers and for staff members. Working relationships are excellent. Young people living at the home are safe.

Reporting systems and actions taken in the past in response to significant incidents have been appropriate. There is good internal scrutiny of records and practice enabling a prompt response to anything identified. The Ofsted protocol for reporting significant incidents is known and followed. Staff have received suitable safeguarding training in order that they can respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Policy and procedural guidance has been established that is consistent with local safeguarding team protocols.

Safeguarding and complaints information is provided for the young people within a children's guide. They are fully aware of the contents of this information and acknowledge that they suffer no recrimination if complaints and grumbles are made. Staff with key worker responsibilities uphold children's rights as well as providing daily support to achieve and develop. Respectful communication is the norm at the home. The young people differentiate their behaviour according to the different settings and situations they find themselves in. Residents respond very well to praise. There is effective use of positive reinforcement opposed to use of sanctions. Support being provided ensures that the young people can make choices about how to lead safe lives.

All aspects of health and safety are managed well. Certification is held centrally to show servicing and maintenance of the fire system and extinguishers, personal appliance testing and electrical and gas installations. A premises fire risk assessment has been completed. This is subject to regular review. The home has a trained representative to support health and safety.

No further checks were carried out on the quality of the vetting and recruitment procedures since no new staff appointment had been made between inspections. Suitable evidence has been viewed previously to confirm no staff start work prior to being in receipt of an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. A robust checking system is evident throughout the recruitment process. Suitable vetting of visitors to the home is also undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted. The home's policy for the management of voluntary workers, agency staff and building contactors who might come into contact with the young people is still not as clear as it should be.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Service history shows operation and management of the home remains to a high standard. There is a lengthy history of achieving excellence within practice. The home's manager is experienced, competent and fully qualified. Practice meets with the requirements of children's homes NMS and associated regulations. No breaches of regulations are identified at this inspection. The staff team understand and have skills to support the needs of the young people. Staff are extremely well motivated and young people are kept safe when living at the home.

Deployment of staff is good. The staffing structure has not experienced any changes between inspections. Staff retention has been excellent. Staff are clear about their roles, balancing their work so that the individual and collective needs of the young people are met whilst ensuring that the necessary administrative tasks are undertaken. Rotas demonstrate that staffing levels are being maintained.

Records at this home show a clarity of purpose in how staff are being managed. Induction and foundation training is provided. Supervision records are good and are linked to staff's personal development and appraisal. There is access to Level 3 and Level 4 National Vocational Qualification training and the Registered Manager's Award, which are recognised qualifications to work and manage children in a residential setting. The home's staff and management team all have relevant qualifications.

Staff have good written guidance, policies and procedures to support their practice. The home's statement of purpose provides good information in accordance with Regulations. Aims and objectives as well as the philosophy of care are outlined. Records are easy to access within two office areas. Staff use the guidance to ensure a consistent response to meeting residents presenting needs. A new intranet system is being set up to store organisation policy and procedures. The system is not yet fully operational and staff training is still to be planned. The Registered Manager is to ensure all the policies outlined within Appendix 1 of the NMS are available on the intranet.

The home is being managed well and run efficiently providing a safe and stable environment for the young people living there. Checks are in place to monitor the home's operation. Reports are maintained in-house and are made available to those permitted to read them. Reports are going to be forwarded to Ofsted in line with new guidance. Effective quality assurance systems are used by the home's management team to continually reflect on and develop services in line with new initiatives. Equality and diversity is firmly established within the culture and ethos of the home. Equality and fairness is reflected within staff's practice to ensure positive experiences continue to be gained. There is a written development plan outlining how the home's operation will be maintained. There is consistent use of self evaluation and improvements identified are managed in a timely and very effective way.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

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

- ensure guidance within the home's policies provides for the management of voluntary workers, agency staff and building contactors who might come into contact with the young people at the home (NMS 27)
- ensure all staff receive comprehensive training in order that they can access the organisations on line system of policy and procedural guidance storage. (NMS 1.4)