

Inspection report for children's home

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC362151
<b>Inspection date</b>	31/05/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephen Trainor
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

---

<b>Date of last inspection</b>	15/10/2010
--------------------------------	------------

---

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

## 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* (March 2011) and the evaluation schedule for children's homes.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

**Outstanding:** a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

**Good:** a service that exceeds minimum requirements

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

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

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

A private organisation operates this children's home. 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. This home is also registered as a school. In-house arrangements support local education authority provision.

### Overall effectiveness

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

All the young people state that they feel safe whilst living at the home. Staff practice delivers a very high standard of care and all the young people achieve and develop their potential. Individuals are clear on their arrangements in place, are aware of plans and programmes, and make excellent progress both socially and educationally. All plans and programmes are implemented extremely well. There is efficient collaboration with partner agencies supporting placements. Relationships between young people and between staff and young people are excellent and each young person provides their full cooperation. There are no behaviour management problems and all the young people have chosen to lead stable lifestyles.

Young peoples' efforts are rewarded and clear incentives help to change behaviours. They are cared for by a highly experienced and motivated staff team. Staff remain fully up to date with professional and legal developments following extensive changes to inspection frameworks. The promotion of young people's education, health and well-being and the management of contact is excellent. Recreational interests are supported very well. There is good emphasis on gaining important life skills and pathway and after care plans are produced that successfully manage the transition away from the home. A pathway plan was still to be provided by one placing authority.

The home's environment is very supportive and underpinned by defined boundaries. Young people's views are consistently gathered and these influence the home's operation and future direction. The views of partner agencies are extremely complimentary. The home's aims and objectives are clearly being fulfilled.

### 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 home contributes to the development of the pathway plan for eligible care leavers. (NMS 12.2)

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

Outcomes for children and young people are **outstanding**.

Young people experience stable placements and progress is being made on many levels including developing independence skills, completing secondary school education, securing employment and placement on further education courses. It is easy to chart progress for each young person by reviewing planning documents, risk assessments, general records and by the positive feedback provided by the young people themselves. Young people are supported by staff and other professionals to achieve personal goals. This helps them to develop a better understanding and appreciation of their personal circumstances. Young people are all working hard in planning for their futures. They show that they can motivate themselves, especially to attend meetings, where they express their views confidently. The young people are optimistic about their future. Young people represent the home well in the local community and many aspects of charity work are undertaken.

All the young people are treated fairly with practice capable of supporting individuals living there. Contact arrangements are established for each resident. Staff possess a good understanding of family histories and this helps to maintain relationships between young people and their families. A young person commented, 'The staff look after the kids and sort contact out'. Risks are carefully managed and there is good work between the home's staff and field social work staff to deliver consistent messages to residents and family members. Some joint working and family support goes above and beyond the normal call of duty. There is excellent planning to support supervised contact. The success with joint working clearly sets the service apart from others. One parent commented, 'They have helped my son in all aspects of his life'.

This children's home is also registered as an independent school. The home employs a full-time teacher as well as a full time teaching assistant to facilitate in-house education. Opportunities exist for the young people to attend different educational placements including local schools and colleges. Work experience placements are also facilitated. The educational outcomes for young people based on initial assessments against special educational needs statements are outstanding. All the young people actively engage with their education programmes and attendance is excellent. Young people's achievements improve self confidence and future prospects.

Young people's health is promoted positively and they choose to follow a healthy lifestyle. All are familiar with their health arrangements and are aware of the contents of their health plans. Many of the young people have completed accredited first aid courses and this helps them to understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own health and well-being. Good relationships are established with the looked after children nurse and this allows statutory medical examinations to be organised. Staff reassure young people if they have concerns about treatments. There is consideration for young people to look after their own medication. Competency based assessments are carried out, and this affords opportunities to develop self-management and independence skills. Medication is stored safely, and records are maintained on the administration of medication, including, prescribed and non prescribed medication. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and this maintains the quality of care being

provided.

Young people's pathway plans are implemented very well and placement experiences provided by staff at the home allow young people to gain life skills to support them into adulthood. The quality of experience provided in-house means young people gain many competencies suited to their preparation for independence and the wider world of work. The management team is familiar with the formal response required for pathway and aftercare planning and this usually results in plans being introduced at the correct stage of placement. A pathway plan was still to be provided by one placing authority. Access to college placements remains integral to planning. There are effective partnership arrangements with local colleges and relevant and interesting courses are being accessed.

### **Quality of care**

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

Staff are skilled in engaging young people positively and this means they choose to lead safe lives. One young person commented, 'Whilst living at the home I see what staff are like on a daily basis and I know I can fully trust them to help me and I know all they want is for me to succeed and be the best person I can be'. A very supportive environment allows excellent relationships to be formed between staff and the young people. The young people recognise and value staff's support and work closely with them in planning their futures.

Individualised planning is evident for each young person and they are clear about their personal targets. Detailed plans remain live and are subject to frequent review through statutory procedures. Equality and diversity is well established within the culture and ethos of the home and practice is clearly underpinned by fairness. A high quality of care is being provided and this enables residents opportunities to develop, self-knowledge, self-help skills and gain self-esteem. Communication between staff, young people and their parents, social workers and other professionals is coordinated extremely well. A social worker commented that, 'clear lines of communication had been established'. There is Large body of evidence to show partnership arrangements are highly effective with each young person making excellent progress.

Developing educational potential forms a clear part of the home's philosophy of care. Many of the young people have educational statements. Care staff emphasise the importance of gaining a good education and encourage school and college attendance. Staff actively support individuals arrangements and the key worker role in particular propagates high levels of attendance and achievement. The home is also registered as a school and this supports local education arrangements and specialist college placement. Continuous learning and development opportunities are presented. One young person commented, 'There is not a lot the staff could do to make me feel happier than I am now, we have just got a new teacher and he is brilliant at his job and we all love going into school now'. Student support and guidance services from a local college endorsed this commenting, 'We were really impressed at all the facilities and the excellent ethos you have in place'.

The young people are consulted with and fully involved in life at the home. They make a clear contribution to the development of services. Expressed opinion and feedback is welcomed. One young person commented, 'The things I think are very good and positive at the home are that all the staff are fully supportive of my decisions I make and want me to do well in my future'.

Young people understand how to make a complaint. A guide covers complaints with information, guidance and contact details of agencies such as Ofsted and advocacy services. The contact details of the Children's Rights Director are also provided. The young people can differentiate between grumbles and serious complaints and are more inclined to sort out minor matters between themselves through discussion or by raising matters at frequent in-house meetings. The group are supportive, work very well together, and value individuals difference.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles and the key worker role delivers health promotion

work covering matters, such as sexual relationships, smoking cessation, drug misuse and healthy living. There is good collaborative links with many different professionals and agencies and this allows helpful guidance and support to be provided when young people are most in need. The responsible organisation provides the young people with many interesting and varied experiences to develop knowledge and awareness through a well established participation project.

Staff engage young people in a wide range of activities to develop individual potential. Staff identify individual interests and have been successful in supporting young people's aspirations. There is a suitable budget provided that enables young people to pursue their hobbies and interests. Holidays are planned for. The balance between organised activities and young people's free time is managed well. Hazards and risks associated with recreation and activities are also managed very well. Recreation is linked to developing healthy lifestyles. There are lots of opportunities to develop skills in the wider community. All young people participate in recreational activities outside the home. The experiences and skills gained are fundamental to their future success as they prepare for the wider world of work and preparation for leaving care.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young people confirm that they are safe and happy living at the home. They learn to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they contribute to the home's operation. They develop skills that enables them to differentiate their behaviour according to the different settings and situations they find themselves in. Young people's personalities prosper and excellent progress is made. All have a strong sense of safety and well-being. All the young people had selected to lead safe lives. Staff continuously deliver safety messages through personal, social and health education.

Young people say that bullying is not an issue of concern to them and confirm that staff do not tolerate any form of bullying. They have confidence that staff will respond to any bullying that could occur. There is very good interaction and sensible discussion around difference and the individual characters making up the peer group maintain a positive self view. The young people are confident that inappropriate views would be challenged. A range of anti-bullying information is available and a clear anti-bullying message is provided through social care and education programmes. All young people understand the many forms that bullying can take and are equally clear on what to do if they have any concerns.

Suitable safeguarding and complaints information is provided for young people. They are aware of the content of this information and acknowledge that they will not suffer any recrimination if complaints and grumbles are made. No complaints had been made. Staff receive regular training to update their knowledge and have an excellent understanding of safeguarding policies, procedures and actions they should take, if an incident arises. Some specialist safeguarding training was provided by an external consultant between inspections. Staff gained greater confidence from this training which confirmed that policy and procedural guidance is consistent with local safeguarding team protocols. No complaints and no significant incidents occurred between inspections.

Systems for dealing with young people who go missing from home are well established. A clear protocol is set out and a relatively low number of reports had been made. No reports had been made since January 2011. Risk assessments take account of a young person's potential to go missing. The home has an excellent working relationship with the local police coordinator and attends forums organised by the local constabulary. Staff understand the systems for reporting and the steps they should take after a young person goes missing. The home is proactive in arranging return interviews so that potential safeguarding concerns are identified.

Staff with key worker responsibilities uphold children's rights as well as providing daily support to achieve and develop. Respectful communication was observed throughout the inspection between young people, staff, and Ofsted. Individual's personalities prosper at this home and an excellent atmosphere was maintained throughout the visit. Young people respond very well to praise. There is effective use of positive reinforcement opposed to the use of sanctions. The young people say that sanctions or punishments are fair and confirm that rewards for good behaviour far outweigh the number of sanctions imposed. The registered manager monitors the use of sanctions ensuring they remain effective.

Physical intervention is a rare occurrence, with no incidents taking place since the previous inspection. Staff are clear that it is very much a last resort and are more comfortable using the positive relationships built up with young people to diffuse difficult situations. All staff receive regular and refresher training in positive handling techniques.

Young people benefit from a permanent, experienced and stable staff team. There have been no full time staff appointments between inspections. Appropriate recruitment policies and procedures are in place and personnel files are well organised. Ofsted National Provider scheme checks this information at the responsible organisations headquarters. Information held in-house confirmed that no staff start work prior to being in receipt of an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. A suitable checking system is evident throughout the recruitment process. The recruitment policy covers the decision making process to be followed when employing staff with cautions or convictions. Vetting of visitors to the home is undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted. There are suitable procedures in place to manage maintenance staff and contractors when they are needed at the home.

Health and safety at the home is managed well ensuring staff and young people remain safe. Certification is held centrally and this shows regular servicing of gas and electrical installations. Portable appliance testing is routinely undertaken. A fire risk assessment of the premises is available. Young people know what to do in the case of an emergency. A range of risk assessments have been produced to support practice and help with hazard identification.

### **Leadership and management**

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

Young people prosper because this service is managed by an experienced and fully qualified manager who is competent to lead the staff team. A strong child focussed service is provided that is conducive to young people developing their potential. There is a clear vision on how the home should operate. The manager is perceptive in identifying the home's strengths and some areas where it could perform better. An accurate verbal self-assessment of the service was provided and this will help to support a continually developing service. The home also has a development plan, training plan and maintenance plan to maintain standards.

Records at this home show good clarity in how staff are managed. Detailed induction and foundation training is provided. New staff have access to new diploma training. Staff confirm that supervision is taking place. A parent commented that staff are, 'Responsible carers who are well trained in the field'. Personal development is excellent and all staff have relevant National Vocational Qualifications. Seven staff members have also completed National Vocational Qualifications at level 4. Well trained and motivated team consistently meet individual's needs including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensuring excellent outcomes for young people. Young people have full confidence in their staff and know who is responsible for them at all times of the day and night. Rotas clearly demonstrate that staffing levels are maintained.

Internal and external monitoring of the home's operation and practice is coordinated with comprehensive monthly reports being completed for both Regulation 33 and 34 visits. Young people actively contribute to these visits with their comments providing a clear snap shot in time on what it is like to live at the home. The home's service history has been scrutinised through inspection activity over many years and this shows an excellent record in compliance. There were no recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Staff have comprehensive written guidance, policies and procedures to support their practice. The responsible organisation has accessible information in hard copy and via a well designed intranet. The home's Statement of Purpose provides information in accordance with regulations. Aims and objectives, as well as the philosophy of care are outlined. Staff use guidance to ensure a consistent response to meeting young people's presenting needs. The ethos and working practices of the home clearly meets aims and objectives and this means young people acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. There is a long history of achievement and good outcomes for young people who have lived at the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.