

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC469411
Inspection date	17/07/2014
Inspector	Alicea Churchward
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	27/11/2013
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2014

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 is a children's home operated by a private company. The home provides care for four young people from 8 years up to 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties and children with learning disabilities.

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 **good**.

Young people thrive in a home dedicated to improving their life chances. Improving outcomes are seen in education, independence and emotional resilience. Young people are genuinely happy in the home and are very positive about the care they receive and the progress they make.

Young people live in a home where their safety and well-being are consistently promoted and protected. Young people have formed excellent relationships with staff and succeed in a home that provides a nurturing and safe foundation. As a result behaviour evident in previous placements such as being frequently missing from care has reduced dramatically.

Young people benefit from well planned and individualised care. Detailed placement plans and independent living plans ensure that young people are cared for consistently and in line with their individual needs. Likewise, young people benefit from a strong staff team who deliver good quality care. Staff receive consistent supervision and training, ensuring high standards of care are maintained within the home.

The home is effectively managed, with a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of childcare practice and nurturing to the young people. One senior manager visiting from a placing authority commented 'this is the nicest most nurturing placement I have seen for a long time' and a placing social worker said 'I would recommend this placement to colleagues and I would place other young people here.' Excellent monitoring systems ensure that all aspects of the home are

closely scrutinised and the appropriate action taken to consistently enhance practice within the home.

Shortfalls at this inspection are in the main documentary and are having little impact upon the young people. Areas for development include having a young people's telephone installed, making sure all notifiable events are sent to Ofsted, including the duration of restraints in the dedicated record, revising the Statement of Purpose, providing parents with information about the home in an accessible format and including identified areas of need outlined by for example an educational psychologist in planning. So that these areas can be targeted worked upon and measured.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
15 (2001)	ensure that children accommodated in the home are provided at all reasonable times with access to a telephone on which to make and receive telephone calls in private, which they may use without reference to persons working in the home (Regulation 15 (4)(a))	30/09/2014
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the duration of the measure of restraint (Regulation 17B (4)(a))	31/08/2014
5 (2001)	revise the statement of purpose and notify the HMCI of any such revision within 28 days. (Regulation 5 (a)(b))	30/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- Children are helped by staff to achieve their educational or training goals. This includes providing support, facilities and opportunities as needed; in this case supporting the recommendations made in an educational psychologist report (NMS 8.4)
- continue to support children's social and emotional development and enable children to develop emotional resilience and self-esteem. (NMS 2.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people are engaging well and investing in their respective placements. Young people benefit from staff and management who place importance on securing good outcomes for the young people in their care. Good practice has been well coordinated in supporting the young people accommodated in all areas. Staff work with young people to build upon their emotional resilience and a therapist has recently been appointed to the service to further develop this area.

Young people are being encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour through improved coordinated plans and programmes and better defined targets. It is clear that the young people have made positive progress and gained confidence from the starting point of their placements. Behaviour management strategies are in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure plans remain suitable.

Young people are motivated by staff and in turn they motivate themselves to follow their personal programmes. They are clear about the ethos and expectations within the home for example clear boundaries and expectations with regard to behaviour and further education or employment. This is consistently promoted by the staff which affords young people a stable environment in which they can grow and develop.

Young people enjoy good health and select to follow a healthy lifestyle. The response taken to support young people's personal, social, health and education training is clear. Young people take responsibility for their health and make clear links between diet and exercise. Regular activities ensure they remain physically active. All young people are familiar with their health arrangements, are aware of the contents of their health plans, and attend their appointments with health professionals.

Young people benefit from improved contact arrangements since their admission to the home. Contact is suitably promoted and facilitated by staff securing better arrangements for young people.

Young people are encouraged to prepare for adulthood at their pace, they say they are enjoying undertaking independence tasks that enable them to do this. They are allocated good aftercare workers who regularly visit young people in the home and support their progress and attend reviews. They say (young people) are happy here they speak positively about their experience of care here, they get on with staff, there are no complaints and staff are always pleasant'. 'Staff work with me to be realistic with the young people.'

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from good relationships with staff which enable them to

engage more positively and learn how to make better choices. Staff are skilled and show good insight and understanding of young people's needs. Young people appreciate and value the efforts staff make. A placing social worker commented, 'this is the longest placement they have had, (the young person) feels like someone is investing in them ... they are happy and safe.'

Staff are successful in acting upon care plans and offer support to young people that positively influences their behaviour. Young people are confident to express their views in their statutory reviews. Staff practice supports young people to maximise their contributions.

Individual plans are of a good quality, reflecting young people's needs and charting their progress. Social workers receive frequent progress updates. All achievements are celebrated and this continuously builds young people's self-esteem. Young people receive rewards for their efforts. Some creative ways of working and use of incentives help focus young people in their placements. Risk-taking behaviours have reduced significantly. Staff take a pro-active approach to keeping young people safe allowing young people to take responsibility for their behaviour in line with their age and development.

Partnership arrangements work well, and communication between staff, young people and their families, social workers and other professionals is good. This results in good coordinated support to meet young people's needs. Young people receive clear support, instruction and updates to help them manage any anxieties they might have and to support them to make positive choices.

Each young person's educational potential is well supported by staff practice. Developing educational potential forms a clear part of the home's philosophy of care. Care staff continuously emphasise the importance of young people gaining the best education. Young people benefit from flexible and creative approaches being used to encourage attendance and this is working well. It has supported young people to take examinations to secure better future outcomes for example in further education and employment.

Young people are of an age where they do not have a pupil education plan, but would benefit from recommendations from educational psychologist reports being part of placement plans so that needs identified can become targeted areas of work for staff and young people to work towards.

Young people understand how to make a complaint. They confirm that complaints, if made, would be responded to in full. A written guide covers complaints, with information, guidance and contact details of agencies such as Ofsted, children's rights and the Children's Rights Director. Young people can identify staff members and the manager to speak to if they have any worries or concerns. The home does not currently provide a telephone to young people so that they may receive and make calls in private, for example to external advocacy services. The complaints procedure refers to a leaflet for parents to describe the procedure; however one is not available and is not known to the staff in the home.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted to ensure young people can make informed decisions on how they can keep themselves safe and understand the impact that their decision making can have on their well-being. There are no issues associated with illegal substances, or alcohol misuse. Support services including children and adolescent mental health services

Medication is stored safely, and records are maintained on the administration of medication. There are clear policies and procedural guidance and these are followed in practice. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and this maintains the quality of care being provided.

Staff engage young people in activities to develop individual potential and enhance learning opportunities. Young people's aspirations are supported; this enables them to pursue their hobbies and interests.

Young people benefit from a large detached property in its own grounds, it is clean well maintained and very homely. Young people were proud to show their home and bedrooms during the inspection and there is a real sense of ownership. The home is located close to local amenities and access to public transport.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say this home is a safe place to live and that there is no bullying. Staff undertake child protection training in order to appropriately respond to suspicions or allegations of abuse. Clear risk assessments are in place and capture individual risk factors for young people. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed with young people and are used as an opportunity to discuss personal safety and remaining safe in the community. Young people engage very well and are committed to their personal aspirations.

Young people live in a home where their safety and well-being are protected. Detailed individual missing from home plans are in place and this ensures the correct procedures and strategies are implemented without delay. Consequently risk taking behaviours such as young people being missing from care have dramatically reduced since their admission to the home.

Staff receive appropriate training in order to appropriately manage physical intervention within the home. Procedures and guidance are in place and are regularly reviewed with staff and young people. Staff are clear that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. De-escalation and redirection techniques are the home's preferred option wherever possible and this has proved successful. Consequently, there are few instances where physical intervention has been applied in the home. There was one minor shortfall in the restraint record; the duration of the actual intervention was not clear.

Staff promote young people's on-going protection by undertaking regular fire drills and service tests, making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of all systems within the home, including the appropriate storage, administration and recording of medication.

Staff are vigilant when managing visitors to the home and take appropriate steps to verify visitors' identity in order to protect the young people. The Statement of Purpose includes a glossary of staff employed within the home and their relevant qualifications.

The system for the recruitment and selection of staff is thorough and ensures young people are only looked after by staff that are appropriately checked in order to work in the home. Young people's views and opinions are central to the recruitment of staff; this process enables young people to feel valued while promoting their self-esteem and confidence.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a suitably qualified and experienced Registered Manager who staff describe as 'passionate about the organisation but more so, the young people ... he works with you and listens to you and has an open door policy.' Young people say 'he is the best ... he sorts things out and he is fair ... he worries about us and want us to do well.'

Staff under the leadership of the manager, work hard to deliver consistent practice. The service remains child-focused and provides a nurturing environment to the young people in their care. Staff remain committed to providing the best possible experiences to secure positive outcomes for young people. Placing authority's comment positively on the progress young people have made and that 'this placement has really made a difference.'

The Registered Manager provides a clear vision for how the home should operate. Practice adjustments had been made in line with changes made to inspection framework, evaluation schedule and grade descriptors. The home's management team showed that it is perceptive in identifying the home's strengths and the areas where it could perform better.

The home's management team provided an accurate assessment of the service and this allows realistic targets to be set. Good evidence is available to support the monitoring of staff practice and develop the home through internal and external quality assurance measures. There is good detail in Regulation 33 and 34 reports being forwarded to Ofsted.

The home has a development plan to secure support future improvement. Management systems seek the views, wishes and feelings of partners and those significant to children, including independent reviewing officers and social workers.

Some positive comments outlined in questionnaires help to define the full impact and value that living at this home has had on young people's lives.

Young people's individual needs, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are supported. Young people have confidence in staff and know who are responsible for them at all times of the day and night. Staffing levels are being maintained. Staff have access to training relevant to working in residential settings. Staff confirmed that they receive good levels of support from management. Staff say 'out of the children's home's I have worked in, this is the best overall ... I am enjoying it is challenging ... (the management) are approachable.'

There is a system in place to notify persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events. Suitable reporting was evident with regard to most incidents; however there are two incidents that have not been notified to Ofsted.

Staff practice is supported by written guidance, policies and procedures. The home's Statement of Purpose provides information in accordance with most of the regulations. The ethos and working practices of the home, as well as the aims and objectives, are outlined, to give information to give placing authority's and commissioning an overview of what the home intends to provide.

However this does not fully make the document accessible to parents as it is not written in a way that is easily understood, for example to those reading the document who may have a level of learning difficulty or who are not a professional in the field of social work. Additionally there is one male member of staff employed within the home, the Registered Manager all other staff are female; this means that the document should be clearer about what the home is doing to promote other appropriate male role models.

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.