

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC401603
Inspection date	26/09/2011
Inspector	Graham Robinson
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school (>295 days/year)

Date of last inspection	02/02/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© Crown copyright 2011

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.

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

The home is registered to accommodate up to 15 young people of either gender with emotional or behavioural difficulties, physical or learning disabilities. Both full time care and respite care is provided. There is a school on site which is registered with the Department for Education.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people are making good progress in relation to their starting points both socially and educationally. They benefit from a nurturing, supportive environment that is underpinned with clear and consistent boundaries, along with generous staffing levels. Individual needs are well identified with plans and strategies in place to address them.

Young people are cared for by a staff team, who work positively and energetically to meet their needs in a non-punitive way. Significant staffing changes have occurred recently due to a change of manager and the expansion of the staff group. However, the good working practices developed over the previous two years remain intact. As a result, safe working practices ensure young people's welfare is promoted.

Good management, supported by consistent and effective levels of monitoring have assisted in the home progressing since the previous full inspection. The strengths and weaknesses of the home are assessed and there are suitable plans for continued development.

Staff and young people enjoy good relationships with each other and this enhances the progress being made by young people. Both the young person's guide and format used to report on external monitoring visits, require updating as they do not include all the necessary information following the introduction of the revised children's homes standards.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- update and revise the young person's guide to include the contact details for the

Children's Rights Director and a young person's independent reviewing officer as well as updating the contact details for Ofsted (NMS 13.5)

- ensure the reports produced following external monitoring visits contain all the areas specified in regulation and guidance. (NMS 21.7)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are achieving positive outcomes in all respects. They receive high levels of support which allows them to prosper socially, educationally and in individual personal areas. The ethos and working practices of the home supports working positively with young people, aiding them to achieve their personal goals and targets. Young people's individual needs are identified and these are reflected in their plans and strategies.

Young people benefit from regular contact with family, friends and other appropriate adults. Parents and social workers report the quality of care is good and young people's needs are well met. In addition good levels of communication between parties ensure young people benefit from a co-ordinated approach to their care.

Young people achieve good educational outcomes based on their starting points. All young people are in full-time education attending either the on-site school, or other community based schools. Young people benefit from having daily routines that promote and assist them in their education. For example, time is set aside in evening routines to support any young person with homework, with each young person being supported by their own designated staff member.

Young people enjoy good health and their health needs are positively promoted. Good health plans ensure individual needs are assessed and met. Young people are encouraged and supported towards a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. This impacts positively on their general health. All young people are registered with community-based health services to access day-to-day health support. Where necessary, young people receive specialist intervention to support emotional and complex needs.

The home is well established within the community and actively encourages young people to take full advantage of the resources available. For example, the home facilitates all young people, whatever their disability, to participate fully in community based activities, such as local scouts and other community groups. Individual activity planners produced weekly allow young people to enjoy appropriate leisure activities, many of them being community based.

Quality of care

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

Staff have the ability to form positive relationships with young people which encourages them to settle and develop trust. Signs and symptoms of frustration or distress in young people are quickly recognised by staff, enabling them to manage situations quickly and sensitively before they escalate. A range of agreed, planned strategies are used by staff to support young people positively, rather than resorting to sanctions. This means the numbers of incidents linked to behaviour management are minimal, resulting in less stressful experiences for young people.

Staff actively seek the views, wishes and feelings of young people, which go some way to young people contributing to certain aspects of the home's operation. For example, views are sought through weekly young people's meetings and individual sessions with key workers. Young people continually discuss their day-to-day choices with staff which supports them to make appropriate decisions.

Young people and their families are aware of how to make a complaint and are provided with appropriate information. The young person's guide viewed is informative, however, the details for the Children's Rights Director and independent reviewing officers are not available for young people. In addition the details for Ofsted are in need of review.

Young people benefit and thrive in a supportive and nurturing environment. Excellent planning documentation clearly identifies individual needs, including identity, religious and cultural needs. Regular review and update ensure young people's needs are current and well met. Young people benefit from good relationships with staff and they all genuinely enjoy each others company. Staff work openly, transparently and communicate positively with young people. As a result young people enjoy a relaxing environment and receive care in a trusting atmosphere where they engage with adults in a positive way.

This home is warm, welcoming and bright, with staff and young people mixing freely with each other. A calm, relaxed atmosphere in a bright, modern building gives an excellent first impression of the home and the people in it. The levels of repair, specialist equipment, fixtures, furnishings and décor are of a high standard. Each young person has their own bedroom complete with en-suite facilities, which are personalised to reflect the taste and interest of the occupant. The home is accessible for people with a physical disability and has numerous areas where young people can be either active or relaxed. Young people take pride in the quality of their environment and facilities. Photographs and mementoes on display reflect young people's positive experiences.

Staff promote healthy lifestyles in a variety of ways. Young people actively engage in a wide range of group activities, individual interests and leisure pursuits. For example, individuals have opportunities to attend community-based projects that cater for their specific needs. Young people benefit from healthy meals which are sociable occasions. Young people are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods, appreciate different cultures and try international cuisine. Individual cultural and medical dietary needs are fully met.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are cared for safely and feel safe. Where safeguarding issues arise, prompt referral to external agencies ensures young people are appropriately protected. The home has established good links with external safeguarding agencies, resulting in young people's welfare and safety being promoted positively. All staff, including those recently appointed, have undertaken initial safeguarding training. Refresher training forms part of the core staff training programme. Overall safeguarding awareness and practice, coupled with a multi-agency approach keeps young people safe.

Young people say that bullying is not an issue of concern and confirm staff will quickly intervene should an incident occur. Staff are alert to young people's specific needs and monitor bullying closely to minimise incidents. Generous staffing levels and good supervision minimises opportunities for bullying.

Since the previous inspection, incidents of young people going missing have been sporadic and currently, this is not a live issue in the home. This shows that young people feel settled in their placement. Good links and levels of communication exist between the home and other agencies who deal with missing young people. Staff understand how to respond should any young person go missing and are aware of the agreed local protocols and practices to protect young people.

Young people are supported to work positively through difficulties, with a minimal number of sanctions imposed. Staff work to diffuse difficult situations positively, without the use of physical intervention, which is viewed as a last resort and only implemented to keep everyone safe. All staff have received initial training in positive handling. Good monitoring of incidents ensures young people's individual strategies are kept under review and adapted. As a result incidences reduce.

The staff team has grown considerably since the previous inspection due to expansion of the service. All new posts are permanent. Appropriate recruitment policies, procedures and practice ensure all new staff are suitably cleared prior to taking up their posts. This ensures only suitably checked people have contact with young people.

Young people are protected with a range of risk assessments which are regularly updated with any changes. Young people participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the home if needed. Each has their own evacuation plan, ensuring that their specific needs are fully accounted for when emergency procedures are practised. Safety checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken. Individual risk assessments, coupled with coping strategies, promote a safe environment for all young people. Individual strategies are updated in light of reviews of young people's risks and progress. Young people confirm that the home is a safe place to live.

Leadership and management

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

Significant staffing changes have taken place since the previous inspection. A new manager has been appointed who is child-focused and has a good insight into how the home should develop. The staff team is bonding well following its recent expansion. Staff are enthusiastic and supportive of the management team and the home's well established ethos, aims and working practices. They understand their role and responsibilities and work with the support of managers to address young people's needs.

The staff team receive regular supervision and appraisals to improve their knowledge and working practices. The majority of staff either have, or are undertaking training for appropriate professional qualifications. New staff are undertaking approved induction processes, coupled with participation in the core staff training programme, which is ongoing. Longer serving staff have opportunities to attend core training events to update their knowledge and skills. This ensures they possess the competences and skills to effectively meet young people's diverse needs.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the home are taking place regularly, meeting with regulatory requirement. Monitoring reports are comprehensive and ensure practice is accountable. Reports appropriately review performance and identify areas for improvements. Young people contribute to monitoring and can discuss their views. However, current reports from external monitoring do not reflect the views of parents.

The new manager is being well supported and demonstrates an understanding of the strengths of the home and areas in need of improvement. A written development plan is in place. No requirements or recommendations have been carried over from the previous inspection, with the home having a good record of compliance.

Despite the considerable staffing changes, the well established ethos, aims and working practices of the home remain intact and young people continue to benefit from highly personalised care that meets their needs. Young people are settled in their placement and are thriving in all areas. They live in an energetic, lively environment where staff are working cohesively with families and other professionals to address young people's individual needs.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.