

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	1 July 2009
Inspector	Jackie Graves
Type of Inspection	Key

Date of last inspection	27 January 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

The home is situated close to local amenities, shops, a leisure centre and transport links. The home can accommodate eight children with physical and learning disabilities, between the ages of 10 and 18. There is a garden with wheelchair access to the ground floor of the building. There is a lift to the first floor but this floor is not fully accessible to people using wheelchairs.

The children are accommodated in single bedrooms, and have access to a lounge, dining room and external playroom. Some parking is available to the rear of the building. Seven young people were at home for part of the inspection.

Summary

This unannounced full inspection looked at all the key standards under all outcomes, plus the standard relating to personal allowances. In addition, the progress the home has made in meeting the two recommendations made at the last inspection, around the child protection procedure and storage of information, was assessed.

The home provides a good service to young people and their families. It is well managed and the service is regularly monitored. Education is supported and young people are encouraged to develop their interests, skills and independence. The home encourages young people to live healthy, active lives.

Young people described what the home is good at: 'Caring for me' and 'Make me very comfortable' plus 'Clean, tidy, safe!' Young people did not make any negative comments but their suggestions for improvements were: 'Going out for more activity' and 'Going on holidays more.'

Families made some positive comments about the care young people receive: 'This is an excellent place for my son; well staffed and organised' and 'The service communicates and involves me and other agencies regarding the progress of my child.' Another family said: 'Staff and management have worked hard to look after my child and support me with access to them. I am given the opportunity to attend functions involving my child.'

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, only two recommendations were made concerning the child protection policy and the security of young people's files.

Reorganisation has resulted in information held on young people being stored securely, whilst being readily accessible to staff.

The home has made sure the child protection policy and procedures are consistent with those of the local safeguarding board to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are well met. Careful attention is paid to young people's dietary and exercise needs to encourage their good health. Staff ensure young people have access to doctors, dentists and other professionals to help maintain their general health and appointments for specialist health services are met.

Menus are developed which incorporate young people's likes and dislikes as well as any dietary needs. They are given opportunities to try foods from other countries and cultures. Meal times are pleasant occasions where young people are encouraged to eat varied foods and make healthy choices. A young person described how the home helps them keep healthy as 'Eat balanced diet, eg salads.'

Staff are trained appropriately to administer both general and specialist medication. Medication is securely stored to promote safety in the home for young people. There are clear methods of recording medication, with systems to check what is administered, so reducing the risk of error. The home ensures that someone suitably trained in first aid is available on each shift to provide any emergency treatment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Parents and families are confident that the home keeps young people safe and protects them from harm or neglect. Staff receive training to support their knowledge of the home's policies and procedures in child protection. There is a clear complaints policy which is made accessible to young people in various forms taking into account their individual communication needs. In surveys, young people said they would 'Talk to staff' if worried about something or 'Indicate to staff by signing' and 'Talk to staff key worker.'

Although bullying is not an issue in the home, any behaviour which could annoy or upset another young person is addressed immediately and followed up in house meetings. This ensures firm boundaries are set and young people can learn the impact of their behaviour on others. Parents feel most staff know their children well and are consistent in managing their behaviour. However, it is felt that occasionally, staff who have not been on shift for some time may not be sufficiently up to date with a young person's current needs to be able to prevent an escalation of their behaviour. There are low levels of restraint and appropriate sanctions are used, such as allowing a young person to calm down in a quiet area.

There are clear procedures for staff to follow should any young person go missing. However, the home is aware of young people's vulnerability and ensures that they are closely supervised.

Steps are taken to keep young people safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. There is a robust system for checking that potential staff are suitable to work with vulnerable young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Education is well promoted and supported so that young people may make progress. Close links are established so that schools and the home communicate effectively for the mutual benefit of young people. Staff assist young people if they have any homework to do.

The manager provides a positive role model for young people and is easily accessible to individual young people through his 'open door' policy. The home ensures each young person receives the individual support they need, through the help of key workers, independent visitors and advocates. Individual programmes of activities are drawn up which encourage young people to participate in the community and develop links outside of the home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's needs are fully assessed and clear plans are drawn up to detail how staff will meet their needs. Young people's plans are regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect their changing needs. There are procedures for young people to move into the home in a planned and sensitive way so that this can be a positive experience for them. A family member commented on how the home helps their child make a positive contribution: 'My child is helping to contribute to the community, their privacy is respected and their behaviour is well managed.'

Arrangements for young people to maintain contact with their families are fully supported by staff. Families are made welcome in the home and are able to meet with their children in private if they wish. Family members are also invited to activities in the home, such as birthday parties, so that young people can maintain essential links with them.

Young people's views are sought about matters affecting their lives, for example in key worker sessions and house meetings. Systems used to seek views reflect young people's differing communication needs. The home plans greater use of symbols and staff refresher training in communication skills to develop the support given to young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Regular maintenance and continuous improvements ensure the premises are kept to a good standard. The building is clean, tidy and well organised, providing a homely environment for residents. Young people have a say in how their bedrooms are decorated and furnished and their rooms reflect their individual interests and personalities.

Young people have also been involved in developing the garden area and summer house as a pleasant, relaxing extension of the home. Good use has been made of part of the garden where young people have the opportunity to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Arrangements for providing pocket money and allowances are clear. Young people are encouraged to make decisions about how to spend their money, with staff support. Staff encourage young people to be as independent as possible and have high expectations of them. Young people develop practical, daily life skills, such as ironing, cleaning and preparing snacks and drinks. Staff work sensitively with young people to help them understand the changes occurring during puberty. There is a focus in the home on helping young people develop their self-esteem and confidence and achieving as much as possible.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is clear written information to help people understand the service. This information is provided in suitable formats for young people, who benefit from the support of staff to help them understand this.

There are clear arrangements for deputising in the manager's absence, to ensure consistency for young people and the staff team. There is an established staff team who have got to know the young people's needs well. The home's own bank staff cover any vacancies. Some parents feel that when staff have not worked in the home for some time, their understanding of young people's changing behaviour is not always up to date.

Good ongoing training is provided to ensure staff maintain and develop their skills and knowledge. Staff are working towards achieving the minimum recommended ratio of national vocational qualifications. There are effective systems for monitoring the care of young people and ensuring the service is continually adapted.

Clear information is recorded so that young people have a record of their history and progress. This information is kept secure to respect young people's right to privacy.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The cultural and religious needs of young people are carefully considered with their families and social workers. Young people are supported to access as many opportunities as possible. There is a culture of tolerance and respect for their differing needs.

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):

- make sure that all staff understand and take into account the reasons for young people's challenging behaviour and respond accordingly (NMS 22)