

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC057718
Inspection date	29/09/2011
Inspector	Paul Scott
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	08/03/2011
--------------------------------	------------

© 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

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a charitable trust. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

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

The quality of care provided by staff enables young people to make exceptionally good progress and achieve excellent outcomes. One parent said, 'overall this is an outstanding service that has done wonderful things for our son.'

Staff work with young people in a way that maximises their potential. Care planning and care practice is highly personalised to comprehensively meet the individual and diverse needs of each young person. Staff work in a coordinated way with young people, their family and people from other agencies involved in young people's lives to ensure young people get the right support, help and guidance that they need on a daily basis. Young people's needs and views are central to the running of the home, and they are fully involved in all decisions affecting their lives.

Young people feel safe and are effectively protected from significant harm. Young people, their family and social workers are very positive about the quality of care and support young people receive from staff. Young people enjoy very positive and caring relationships with staff and each other. They receive continuity of care, which enables them to develop trusting relationships with staff who are knowledgeable and familiar with young people's individual routines, enabling these to be maintained successfully.

Young people are looked after by highly competent, well trained staff with the right skills and experience to meet young people's complex needs. The home is very well managed. The manager and staff place a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of childcare. The manager makes effective use of the very good monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care provided and improve the outcomes for young people. One area for attention is identified, relating to Regulation 34 monitoring.

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
34 (2001)	ensure Ofsted are supplied with a report in respect of any review conducted for the purposes of monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6. (Regulation 34 (2))	04/11/2011

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making exceptional progress in many aspects of their lives. They benefit from well planned care which is highly personalised to their individual and their specific needs. This means young people's life opportunities are not limited by the inequalities associated with their disabilities.

Young people's health care is extremely well managed. Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health. For example, young people are encouraged to plan their menus and go shopping for healthy and nutritional food. Consequently young people develop an understanding of what foods they can and cannot eat. One parent said, 'my son is much healthier because staff have taught him how to manage his diet.' Staff take an enabling approach to young people taking exercise. Staff have done some excellent work with one young person to reduce his reliance on his wheelchair and increase his mobility.

Young people have exceptionally good attendance at school and are making progress relative to their age, understanding and individual ability. Arrangements for education are highly individualised. Staff are highly supportive of young people's education. They have established strong links with schools and specialist educational services. Staff work effectively with education professionals to challenge and overcome barriers to young people's full participation in education. One social worker said, 'staff have good links with schools who speak highly of the support staff offer to young people and school staff.' This collaborative approach has proven highly effective. For example, a young person has recently returned to full-time education because staff have worked effectively with the young person and education services to support his reintegration to the school setting.

Young people benefit from appropriate, safe and well-managed contact with their family and other important people in their lives. Staff work really hard to ensure young people maintain and develop positive relationships with their family. One parent said, 'staff have really helped rebuild the relationship between me and my child. Staff are always there to give me support.' The relationships staff have with young people's families are a notable strength. One parent said, 'I regard staff as an extra group of friends who look after our son.' This collaborative and supportive approach has led to young people having increased contact with important people in their lives.

Young people are very well supported to develop their independent living skills. Good opportunities are provided for young people to develop new skills, with good support and encouragement from staff. This enables young people to develop their self-confidence to complete daily tasks safely and independently. Young people are extremely well supported to make the transition to adult living. Staff have established good links with leaving care workers, adult services and other relevant professionals to ensure young people's transition to adult life is well planned. This means young people's needs are clearly understood and appropriate services are identified to meet their individual needs. Staff provide ongoing support to young people who have moved on to adult life. One social worker said, 'staff go above and beyond what is expected. For example, in the absence of family, staff provided excellent support for a young person who left the home.'

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from living in an exceptionally supportive environment. Staff have consistently high aspirations for young people and are proud of how well young people are doing. They always place the needs of young people at the centre of their practice and are fully committed to providing them with excellent support to enable young people to cope well with the challenges they face in their lives. This means young people get the right support they need to make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives.

Outstanding care is given to young people with disabilities. Staff work hard to promote family values in an environment that is sensitive to young people's individual needs. One parent said, 'Pocket Nook is like a family home rather than a children's home.' Consequently, young people enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff and other young people. One social worker said, 'there are excellent relationships between young people and staff, and lots of positive interaction between young people.'

Staff provide young people with considerable support to express themselves so they can make informed decisions and express themselves. Every effort is made to consult with them and involve them. For example, communication difficulties are creatively overcome through the empowering use of visual supports, which staff use to facilitate effective communication. Young people's families are actively involved in consultation, as expert voices and advocates. All parents confirm this. This empowers young people and their families in the knowledge that their views and opinions are actively sought and considered, so they have a say in matters that may affect them.

Young people are cared for by staff who give their individual needs the highest priority. Care planning and staff's day-to-day practice recognises young people as individuals. Young people's individual needs are very well documented in the comprehensive and personalised care plans. Staff know young people very well and consistently put these plans into practice ensuring young people's needs arising from

their disability, personal identity, interests and views are effectively promoted. This means young people receive a highly personalised service designed to meet their diverse and individual needs.

Young people live in a healthy environment that actively promotes their physical health and emotional and psychological well-being. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's specific health needs and have received specific training to ensure young people's needs can be met on a daily basis. They closely monitor young people to make sure they are healthy. Staff provide young people with the right support they need to enable young people to access community and specialist health services.

Young people are actively involved in a wide range of enjoyable, stimulating and creative activities that are designed to build self-esteem, enhance independence and promote social inclusion. One parent said, 'I can pop into the home at any time but I have to ring because my son does so many activities.' Staff enjoy spending time with young people and make good use of the recreational resources available within the home and the community. Leisure time is seen as an opportunity for both fun and learning. For example, staff enabled a young person to overcome his anxieties of travelling in cars by creatively involving him in a number of vehicle-related activities that resulted in him sitting in the car and asking to go for a ride.

Young people live in a very comfortable house that is suitably designed to meet young people's needs, including needs arising from disabilities. The location of the home ensures young people have good access to local places of interest including shops, parks and community amenities. The home is well maintained and suitably decorated to reflect young people's individual needs and tastes. For example, one young person's bedroom has been decorated in the same colours as his bedroom at home to minimise the anxiety caused by change. A number of areas in the home have been developed to provide stimulating environment for young people with disabilities. For example, the home has a sensory room and is currently developing a sensory garden.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they 'feel safe'. They are effectively protected from harm because staff give young people's safety the highest priority and they are well trained in safeguarding. For example, they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and know exactly what they need to do to keep young people safe. Young people are protected by a range of robust safeguarding measures such as comprehensive risk assessments and systems to deal with any child protection issues or complaints. Staff know young people extremely well and take positive steps to proactively manage young people's risks and vulnerabilities to ensure young people's welfare is consistently promoted.

The home has effective procedures for monitoring young people. High staffing ratios ensure young people are given the supervision and support they need to keep themselves safe. Consequently, young people are effectively protected from bullying, intimidation and harassment and there are no issues of young people going missing from home. One parent said 'my child always ran off from his previous placement but has never gone missing from Pocket Nook. This is because staff are very good at keeping him safe and he doesn't want to run off.'

There is a very positive, calm and gentle approach to behaviour management which means young people's complex behaviour is sensitively and effectively managed. As a result, young people's behaviour is generally very good and continues to improve. This is because staff have developed an understanding of the times and factors that contribute to young people becoming anxious, upset and frustrated. Staff use well thought-out and effective behaviour management strategies, specific to the individual needs of young people with disabilities. One parent said, 'through their patience and hard work staff have turned a very angry, violent and confused boy into a calm, happy young man who has control over his autistic outbursts.'

The recruitment and selection of people working at the home is very thorough to ensure young people are well protected. The manager carefully ensures that staff have the right skills and competencies to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are protected by a range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff and young people are involved in regular fire drills to ensure they know how to safely evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively and efficiently managed in their best interest. The home meets the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose and young people, their families and social workers are very clear and complimentary about the services and support the home provides. One social worker said, 'this is an outstanding service that delivers what you would expect and more.'

The manager and staff clearly have a strong commitment to delivering an exceptionally high standard of childcare that places the personal needs of young people at the centre of their work. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the excellent progress young people are making in many aspects of their lives, including social interaction and relationships, behaviour management and health.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the homes strengths and the areas for further development. They provide good leadership and guidance for staff to ensure the service continues to develop and improve the quality of care offered to young people living at the home. The provider and manager effectively monitor the

quality of care, including consultation with young people and their parents, and take appropriate action to improve outcomes for young people. However, Regulation 34 monitoring reports have not been sent to Ofsted.

Young people are cared for by a stable, caring and committed staff team who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the high expectations for providing excellent childcare. One social worker said, 'I am always impressed with the skills of staff, they are highly skilled staff team'. Staff are well supported by the manager who ensures they receive day-to-day support and professional supervision regularly. This means staff are provided with good opportunities to develop their practice, look at ways to improve the service they offer, to reflect on young people's progress and how best to support them.

The organisation has an excellent commitment to staff training. For example, all staff have undertaken mandatory training in key areas of practice and additional, more specific training to meet the emerging needs of young people in their care. For example, staff have been trained in autism, epilepsy and the use of communication aids to ensure they can meet young people's individually diverse needs.

The home's written records are securely stored and provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Young people's progress is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure care planning and care practice is relevant to meeting young people's needs.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.