

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC413992
Inspection date	10/08/2011
Inspector	Diane Thackrah
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	10/08/2010
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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 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 service is registered with Ofsted to provide education and care to a maximum of 11 young people. It is a small privately owned independent residential school and children's home for young people aged 10 to 19 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, often combined with moderate learning difficulties. There is education on site.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home with many strengths. The support that young people receive helps them to make good progress in all areas of their lives. Young people are happy and feel safe. They enjoy sound relationships with the staff, who provide a caring and nurturing environment with consistent and clear boundaries. Staff are clear about young people's care plans and this allows them to provide personalised, well planned care, taking into account young people's individual needs. There is a competent, experienced and enthusiastic staff team with a wide range of skills and this helps to ensure that young people receive the support they need.

The senior management team clearly understand the strengths and weakness of the service and have a commitment to raising standards. Young people are well supported to achieve academically and there is a strong focus on helping young people to develop positive behaviour. The health needs of young people are promoted and protected as young people are supported to access health care that is appropriate to their needs. There is also a strong focus on healthy living such as healthy eating and exercise.

There are many strong systems in place for ensuring that young people are safe. This could be further improved by improving the procedures for the recruitment of staff. The procedures for keeping young people safe need to be improved by ensuring that safe working practices occur in relation to use of contractors on site for maintenance work. Recording is generally good. However, in order to fully promote safety in the home the recording of sanctions and restraints requires improvement.

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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which includes all information required by this regulation (Regulation 14 (b)(3))	14/09/2011
26 (2001)	ensure that a person is not employed to work at the home unless they are fit to do so (Regulation 26, Schedule 2)	14/09/2011
23 (2001)	ensure that all parts of the home to which young people have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to health and safety (Regulation 23 (a))	14/09/2011

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people achieve positive outcomes in all areas of their lives. The effective support they receive from staff helps them to develop confidence and a positive self-view. A key working system has recently been introduced and this helps young people to focus on their goals and feelings. This system also helps young people to develop positive relationships with staff. There is a strong focus on treating young people as individuals and this helps to ensure that individual needs are met. This approach also helps young people to understand their backgrounds. The arrangements for supporting contact with families are good and allow young people to maintain positive contact with family members and friends.

Young people enjoy good health as they have access to a range of health care professionals. Specialist health care services such as physiotherapy are accessed for those who need them and this helps to promote young people's good health. Healthy living is valued and encouraged in the form of good eating and lots of exercise. Many of the current young people lead healthy lifestyles and enjoy swimming and playing football. All young people attend the school on-site and are making good progress. Attendance is good and there are high staffing levels to support young people should they experience difficulties in school. Young people all attend school on a full-time basis. There is a clear distinction between the school and the home allowing young people to gain the most out of their education and their free time. The educational attainment of young people is good. Staff value education and recognise that mainstream education is not appropriate for all young people. Staff have a strong understanding of young people's curriculum as there is close working with teaching staff. This allows young people to benefit from consistent educational support which helps them to succeed.

Young people's progress is supported through their active involvement in activities in the community. All young people partake in a community based activity that reflects their choice. Currently, individual young people are attending a local scouts group, trampolining classes, volunteering, football club, rugby club and Tai Kwando. This has helped young people to develop a positive self-image, new skills and meet new

friends outside of the school/home environment. Young people learn skills that will prepare them for independence, including daily age appropriate chores such as helping to clear the table at meal times and helping staff with laundry. Young people also assist in shopping and the preparation of some meals.

Quality of care

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

Young people benefit from positive care from a professional staff team. There are sound relationships between staff and young people which are based on respect. This helps young people to feel valued. Staff understand young people's individual strengths and needs. These are detailed in care plans and discussed regularly in teams meetings and supervision sessions. Young people's needs are kept under review and positive steps are taken to ensure that statutory reviews occur as necessary. Young people are consulted about their care on a regular basis. This helps to ensure that they feel valued and the care they receive meets their needs. There is a commitment to anti-discriminatory practice. A clear policy is available which staff are expected to read and follow. There are good arrangements for supporting young people's cultural needs and any issues relating to their sexuality. This includes providing a cultural diet and supporting young people to maintain a connection with the communities they come from. Positive action is taken to support young people who have a disability. This includes supporting young people to attend any health related appointments. All of these steps help young people to make good progress in their development.

The views and wishes of young people have significant influence on the running of the home and the delivery of care. Young people meet with staff formally for house meetings in order for them to have their say about issues that affect them, for example, regarding the decoration of their bedrooms, new clothes they have been bought, the menu and leisure activities. These steps help young people to feel valued and contribute to preparation for adulthood. Staff are well placed to positively address challenges and barriers to educational progress and achievement. They maintain close contact with educational staff which helps to ensure that young people benefit from consistency in care. There have been recent environmental improvements made to the school building in preparation for the new school term. This means that young people will benefit from using bright, spacious and modern classrooms. The home and grounds are well maintained, safe and provide a pleasant and homely environment for young people to enjoy.

Complaints are taken seriously and young people are encouraged and supported to raise any concerns they have. For example, there is clear information in the young people's guide about how to make a complaint.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are satisfactory arrangements for keeping young people safe. This includes ensuring that young people feel that they have an adult to talk to from that staff team, and from outside the home. All young people have a key worker and positive relationships with all staff are encouraged. Positive contact with social workers and family members is also facilitated and this helps young people to feel safe. It is not common for young people to go missing from the home. Staff are very clear about what they should do to keep young people safe if they do go missing. Bullying is not a serious problem in the home. Young people are sure that they will be protected from bullying should it occur and this helps them to feel safe. The close support and high staffing levels also promote young people's feelings of safety. Management appropriately respond to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Staff are also clear about their responsibilities for child protection and regular training is provided in this area.

There is a positive response to behaviour management which helps young people to develop positive behaviour. Physical restraint is used to a minimum, appropriately and as a last resort. The reduction in the incidents of restraint being used for individual young people demonstrates improvements in their behaviour. Staff receive training in relation to restraint and behaviour management. This helps to promote young people's well-being. However, the recording of incidents of restraints and sanctions is not robust and thus does not fully promote the positive care of young people.

Policies and procedures are in place for the safe recruitment of staff. Robust employment checks have not been completed on all current staff prior to commencing work in the home. For example, there are some gaps in employment history for some staff members. All staff have a Criminal Records Bureau check at enhanced level but other checks, including references have not been obtained. This does not fully promote young people's safety.

In general, young people benefit from living in an environment which is physically safe and secure. Regular checks are made within the home to promote safety. There are plans in place to upgrade the current fire detection system in order to promote young people's safety. Staff training occurs in safe working practices such as fire safety and food hygiene which promotes safe care. Building and maintenance work is currently being carried out in the home by outside contractors. This is a positive step in terms of improving the environment and safety for young people. There is close supervision of young people in order to promote their safety while this work is being completed. However, the measures in place for the risk assessment of this work are not robust and do not take in to account young people's safety.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from effective management. The provider meets the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose. This document is clear, comprehensive and accessible which ensures that information is available for the people who need it.

Staff say that there are clear lines of accountability in the home. There is a strong team working ethic which helps to ensure that young people benefit from consistency in their care. Staff say that they feel valued and that there is a focus on learning and development in the home. They are enthusiastic and demonstrate a strong commitment to promoting positive outcomes for young people. All current staff have or are working towards the National Vocational Qualification level three in Caring for Children and Young People. Some staff are undertaking level 4 of this qualification. Other training recently undertaken by staff includes fire safety, safe restraint and safeguarding. The high staffing levels help to ensure that young people's needs are well met.

The provider has a clear commitment to continuous improvement. There is a development plan in place and positive action has been taken in relation to the requirements made at the last inspection. Robust quality assurance practices take place such as regular Regulation 33 and 34 visits. These measures help to monitor, and improve the quality of service provided to young people. For example, some bedrooms have recently been redecorated and additional staff training has been provided. The provider has developed positive working relationships with outside agencies such as the health service and placing authorities. This helps to ensure that young people make positive progress in all areas of their lives. Record keeping in the home is good. Significant incidents are well recorded and this allows for good monitoring of incidents.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.