

Bladon House School

Inspection report for Children's Home

Unique reference number	SC372504
Inspection date	04/02/2010
Inspector	Jackie Callaghan / Joanne Vyas
Type of inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	15/08/2008

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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's accommodation is situated on two sites. The main site is set in extensive grounds. There are six houses on the main site and one home off site. The number of beds in each house varies from one to 16 beds. Children and young people are accommodated according to their gender, age and compatibility. Each house has its own lounge, dining room and kitchen.

All children and young people living at the home receive education at the provision's school. The home is near to a town centre and within commuting distance of a large city centre. The home has its own transport which is used to enable children and young people to access community facilities.

Each unit has its own team of care staff and waking night staff. There are currently 38 children living at the home and all were present during this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This full visit is part of an integrated single inspection aligned with the education inspection. The visit concentrated on the key national minimum standards. The overall judgement in this report is based on the standards inspected within the relevant Every Child Matters outcome groups.

The overall quality rating for this setting is good. Young people continue to receive good quality care, guidance and support. They are happy and they show trust with the adults around them. Two recommendations and one action has been raised as a result of this inspection, in the economic wellbeing and organisation outcome groups.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were five recommendations raised. Four of these have been fully met. Medication recording now details the receipt of all drugs and the complaints procedure now contains all points required by national minimum standard 16.3. The home has submitted its child protection policy to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and any gaps in employment application forms are fully explored.

Most staff are now receiving formal supervisions within the timescale required. However, staff supervision for those who are working in the home's new buildings is still a little erratic. Therefore the recommendation is to be repeated.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people gain a superb understanding about the benefits of healthy living. They follow personal care routines with high levels of independence. There are efficient arrangements to ensure that medication is safely administered, ensuring that young people's health needs are fully met and their welfare is safeguarded. There is excellent access to health care professionals such as a qualified nurse who works closely with staff and parents to identify and meet young people's needs.

Young people are provided with a nutritiously balanced and appealing menu, taking into consideration their likes and dislikes. Most importantly, young people have plenty of opportunities to fully participate in a variety of activities that are fun and suit their interests, skills and abilities. For example, a three course Mexican meal eaten as part of celebrating world foods. Young people and staff decorated the tables with Mexican mats and flags which they made in activities. This enables young people to get a flavour of Mexican life and ensures they receive a fruitful range of health benefits and experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff recognise that not all young people are the same. They make sure that young people have privacy, choice and control over the support they need and how it is delivered. The home has effective leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety and young people's welfare is paramount. One young person informed us 'when I go home to mom and dad I say, 'when am I going back home?' as I call this my home'.

The complaints record is actively monitored to make sure that young people's rights and entitlements are upheld and that the process is effective. One young person commented that 'I know who to complain to if I'm unhappy'. The home has an anti-bullying policy and bullying is known by all to be unacceptable. Any issues are discussed openly ensuring young people are protected. This was confirmed by one young person who commented that 'I have been bullied, but not now. Staff were good and helped sort it out quickly'.

Young people's welfare is protected because staff receive a wide range of training in child protection. They demonstrate a good knowledge of policies and procedures. The home takes steps to ensure that young people who are absent without consent are protected in-line with written policy and guidance.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the home's behaviour management policy and strategies. These policies have as their prime objective, the creation of a safe, supportive learning environment. There is a very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and young people. There is,

however, an excessive measure of control taking place. It is acknowledged that the extreme nature of individual circumstances have warranted this course of action and, agreement has been sought from external health and social care professionals. Nonetheless, this measure of control means that the home is not working in-line with their Statement of Purpose as they are not an approved secure accommodation.

Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. There are risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, young people's behaviour, and activities. The home operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate awareness of the need to safeguard young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's educational progress at the school is actively supported by the residential provision. Young people explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently, the care, learning opportunities and activities are excellent. Young people's thinking is challenged as they take part in various community activities, for example, the sea cadets.

Young people receive superb individual support when they need it. Considerable effort is put into combining education, care and health into a package which, will not only meet identified needs but promote development. Young people freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. Their well-being is positively promoted as they are each allocated to a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. Thus, young people benefit from living at the home because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are respected as individuals. Staff build a clear picture of their likes and dislikes such as what they enjoy eating and playing with. On recognition of young people's preferences, they work actively to encourage them to try new activities and experiences. Young people are supported by detailed care plans which comprehensively reflect their needs and wishes. Plans include thorough risk assessments which enable young people to maintain their levels of independence in a safe manner. The Registered Manager and staff team promote the young people's positive awareness of gender and diversity both within the home and the wider community.

Statutory review meetings take place within timescales to review young people's progress through the assessment process. Young people are actively supported to attend and make contributions to these meetings. Young people are encouraged to try things themselves and are supported effectively, so as they become as

independent as possible. Staff challenge young people and encourage them in every way, continually developing their thinking, speech, language and communication skills. Their success is celebrated continually, raising their confidence and self-esteem. Information is shared daily between all staff, which ensures they are fully knowledgeable and prepared to do their best for each young person to help them.

Young people truly benefit from staff who spend a large majority of their time sitting and interacting with them which actively supports their care and development. Parents and carers phone the home for progress reports and staff regularly contact them to keep them informed of any changes or issues of concern. Young people are supported to maintain contact with family and friends whilst at the home. As a result, young people are very settled because their parent's and/or carers are exceptionally well-informed and actively involved with the setting. The home's diligent systems consistently gain young people's views about matters affecting their daily lives and the general running of the home. This helps young people to have ownership of the setting that actively encourages a sense of belonging.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Preparation for young people's economic well-being is clearly paramount. Young people are continually encouraged to develop their thinking skills and are learning how to express themselves clearly using various aids and communication systems. Young people are being well-supported in their transition on admission to or when leaving the home to return to their family or other adult settings.

The provision's accommodation ranges from adequate to very good and young people benefit from staying in comfortable surroundings. The home does provide the right environment to ensure that the social and personal needs of each young person are being met. However, there is a series of doors that have locks on that can restrict the movement of young people from freely walking around the whole site. It is acknowledged that the home are working hard to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between young people's freedom and their physical safety and security. Nevertheless, there is a need to include an overt description of this security within young people's care plans. This will ensure that placing authority are signed up to it and have a full awareness. There are good systems in place that recognise maintenance issues and those with health and safety implications are rectified as a priority.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

As identified in staying safe a course of action has led the home to be operating out of line with its Statement of Purpose and an action has been raised to address this. Young people are well-informed about what the home provides through a range of young people friendly information.

Teamwork amongst staff is strong and there are consistent approaches used via consultation with outside agencies. Staff create a warm and friendly atmosphere which enables young people to feel relaxed. They are sensitive to the individual needs of young people and have an awareness of what may upset them, for example, noise levels. There is continuity of staffing with young people having allocated staff for the duration of a shift.

Staff are well trained and benefit from regular staff meetings. However, staff's support processes are weakened because not all staff, including agency staff, are receiving regular half-termly supervision. New staff receive a satisfactory induction package which prepares them for their role. The overwhelming majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

There are good procedures for monitoring the operation of the provision. The management team provides very effective leadership for the staff group, and as a result, young people receive consistent care. Young people's care files are very well organised to include all of the information detailed in Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001, enabling the home to respond, in a timely manner, to any request made by a young person to read their care file.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All of the home's recording systems take account of potential needs in relation to a young person's diversity such as identity, race, culture and religion. The home provides an environment where the value of equality and diversity is understood, promoted and celebrated. Staff create an exceptionally warm and friendly atmosphere which enables all of their young people to feel relaxed.

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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
1	ensure that the children's home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose (Regulation 4).	03/04/2010

Recommendations

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

- ensure that any physical restrictions on normal movement within the home is agreed within the young people's placement plan (NMS 23.5)
- ensure that agency staff receive one supervision after every 10 shifts and that all regular staff receive supervision as detailed in Standard 28. (NMS 28.2).