

Cornerstones - The Grange

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspection date	13/07/2011
Inspector	Sarah Oldham
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Setting address	Higher House Farm, Booths Lane, Lymm, Warrington, Cheshire, WA13 0PE
Telephone number	01925 756638
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Registered person	Cornerstones
Registered manager	Michelle Pitt
Responsible individual	Christopher Ardern
Date of last inspection	15/03/2011

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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

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, learning disabilities and sensory impairments. Young people are vulnerable with complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorders and complex neurological conditions. The home is owned and managed by an independent specialist provider with three other homes in the area. The home is situated semi-rurally and has a car park and gardens

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people are provided with outstanding care and support in a positive, nurturing environment. Outcomes for young people are positive and they benefit from a consistently high level of care. Comprehensive individual care plans detail all levels of care and support that the young people need and how these needs are to be met. Care plans are discussed with placing social workers, parents and young people. The care plans are in a pictorial format for the young people. This ensures that they are included with all aspects of their care. The home is organised and managed effectively. It is situated within a semi-rural setting but young people are supported to access community facilities. Young people and staff have excellent relationships and this ensures that the wishes and feelings of the young people remain at the forefront of all practice. Staff are experienced and have appropriate training to enable them to support young people with complex needs.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place to promote the safety of young people. Policies and procedures that underpin the promotion of safety and well-being are current and known by staff. The home has developed excellent relationships with parents and placing social workers who comment positively about the care provided.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

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Children and young live in a home and benefit from individualised care and support. All staff have appropriate qualifications, experience and knowledge to ensure young people receive an excellent level of care. Young people say that they really like living at the home and feel that staff support them with all aspects of their care. One young person said, 'I really like living here, there is always something to do and I like all the staff.' Other young people indicated that they were happy living at the home. Staff are aware of and support the different forms of communication used by the young people and this enables the young people to be fully involved in their care.

Staff ensure that contact arrangements are clearly identified and support this exceptionally well. Placing social workers say that the staff are proactive in supporting contact. One social worker said, 'staff provide excellent support to the young people and their parents in maintaining contact and this really appreciated by parents.' This was confirmed by parents who responded to questionnaires regarding the support and care their children receive.

Young people are supported with their education. Some of the young people attend the school run by the company whilst some attend local authority schools. Staff have developed excellent links with external education resources as well as the 'in-house' school. This ensures that the young people are provided with the opportunity to achieve positive educational outcomes. Staff attend education reviews, parent evenings and liaise with teaching staff to provide a continuity of educational support. All the young people have a statement of special educational needs and a copy of this is maintained on the young people's individual care file. For those young people who are no longer in education, support is provided with planning for transition onto adulthood. This includes completing a structured training and support plan that is developed in accordance with the individual needs and ability of each young person.

Health care needs of young people are positively promoted. All young people are registered with health care professionals, including a doctor, dentist and optician within the local community. Where additional health care support is identified, this is also supported; for example, by child and adolescent mental health services. Staff have received appropriate training in the promotion of health, including first aid, management and administration of medication and the promotion of healthy living. This ensures that the young people have their health care needs clearly identified and addressed.

Young people are involved in the planning of meals and say that they really enjoy the food. One young person said, 'the food here is really nice and I get lots of choice of things I like to eat.' Meal times are relaxed, sociable occasions. This enables staff to act as positive role models for young people and enables positive discussions about the day's events.

Young people have access to a range of leisure facilities. These include: attending local youth clubs; music lessons; horse riding; and use of local leisure facilities including swimming and sports facilities. In addition the home has a range of leisure activities including a game console, trampoline and area for football. Young people

are also involved in growing vegetables and gardening. Young people say that they really enjoy the range of activities available.

Quality of care

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

Prior to moving into the home, comprehensive assessments of individual care needs are undertaken. This enables individualised care plans to be developed. This ensures that all identified aspects of care and support are detailed within care plans to effectively meet young people's needs. Young people are encouraged and supported to visit the home prior to moving in. This enables them to meet with staff and other residents. Where this is not possible, staff ensure that information about the home is provided to the young person in an appropriate format so they have an understanding of where they will be living and the support that they will receive.

Children, young people and staff have excellent relationships. Staff use a variety of communication methods to enable individualised communication. This includes verbal, pictorial and signs and gestures. Staff work alongside other professionals in developing appropriate communication for the children and young people. This ensures a consistency for the children and young people and enables effective communication. Children and young people have excellent opportunities to express their own thoughts and ideas.

Detailed placement plans are in place and these provide clear details of individual needs, including identity, religious and cultural needs. Placement plans are working documents that are kept under review and updated to reflect current needs. The children and young people are involved in their placement plans, as are family, placing social workers and education. This ensures continuity of care and support and the involvement all professionals involved in supporting the children and young people.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and cover all aspects of daily living, including health care. This ensures that the safety and well-being of the children and young people is supported and promoted at all times. The complaints procedure is in an accessible format and included within the children's guide. Independent advocates are accessed to enable children and young people to express their wishes and views clearly.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has outstanding systems in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive regular training on the promotion of safe care to ensure that their knowledge and practice is current. Policies and procedures underpin practice and comprehensive individual risk assessments are in place for all young people. This ensures that the young people are effectively supported and their safety and well-being is paramount. Young people say that they feel safe at the home and that they do not feel bullied. Information about what to do in the case of being bullied is available in both written and pictorial format. Staff are aware of the importance of being proactive in response to any potential incidence of bullying. There is a comprehensive policy and procedure in place in the event of a young person missing from the home. There has been no incidence of this. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of this happening.

Young people are able to have visitors and staff are aware of the importance of ensuring that all visitors are known and identification is sought. This safeguards the young people who live there.

Clear support plans help young people with their individual behaviours. Sanctions are not used and physical intervention is only used if a young person is at risk of harm. Comprehensive documentation is completed and the views of the young person sought. This is monitored by the manager and senior staff from the company. This ensures appropriate behaviour management strategies are followed and support provided to the young person is consistent with their individual plan.

Young people benefit from a permanent, experienced and stable staff team. Appropriate recruitment policies and procedures are in place and details of suitable checks, showing that staff are re-checked every three years, are available on site. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place regarding individuals and the premises. This ensures that the safety and well-being of the young people remains at the forefront of all practice. Service contracts for fire, gas and electrical equipment are in place. Young people participate in regular fire drills and staff are aware of the individual support required for each young person during the evacuation process. Regular checks of the fire alarm, smoke detectors and emergency lighting systems take place.

Leadership and management

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

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The manager has the necessary skills, experience, qualification and understanding of the needs of the children and young people, to ensure that a clear vision of how the home operates is positively shared by all staff. Staff are supportive of the management team and work closely with them to promote positive outcomes for the children and young people. Excellent links have been made with parents, placing social workers, schools and health professionals to ensure that the needs of the children and young people are consistently supported. The home operates in accordance with the Statement of Purpose and this document is made available to all interested parties. All young people have a copy of the children's guide in an individually tailored format. This ensures that they have a good understanding of how the home operates and how to make a complaint. Independent advocacy services are made available to enable young people to discuss any issues of concern.

Excellent internal monitoring systems are in place. This ensures that the home functions in accordance with the aims and objectives and identifies any areas for improvement or development. This ensures that management is reflective of practice and continually evaluates the service provided. Views of young people, parents and placing social workers about the service are sought on a regular basis. This enables open and effective communication in ensuring that the young people's needs are addressed.

Staff members have appropriate qualifications and there is a comprehensive on-going training programme in place for all staff. This ensures that staff knowledge and skills are current and that their practice fully supports the needs of the young people. Staff also receive regular supervision and get ongoing support and guidance. The manager understands the strengths of the home and areas where it could perform better. A written team plan is in place, which details plans for improvement. The home has an excellent record in compliance and has responded positively to inspection. Children and young people live in a home where staff provide excellent levels of care and support. This benefits the children and young people as they gain skills and knowledge, within their own individual abilities, to prepare them for adulthood.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.

