

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Christina Maddison
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is run by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for one child or young person with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make progress in all areas of their lives due to the care given to them by a very caring and committed manager and staff team, who work hard to achieve positive outcomes for young people. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and learn about the consequences of their behaviour. This is achieved through a structured and consistent approach from the staff team who work effectively together and are supported by an enthusiastic and well-organised manager.

Staff have high aspirations for young people and work closely with educational providers to engage young people with education and help them to achieve well. Staff promote learning through reading books with young people, playing board games and jigsaw puzzles. Staff also encourage young people to spend their time constructively by taking part in structured and well run activities in the community.

Health care needs are fully met and staff are sensitive to any arising health issues that young people may present. The home has good links to appropriate health care professionals, such as therapists, dentists and opticians. A healthy diet is promoted and young people are encouraged to learn about where their food comes from by growing vegetables in the garden.

Young people said that they felt safe in the home and that staff would always keep them safe. Relationships between staff and young people are full of appropriate humour, trust, honesty and openness and are based on a nurturing approach.

There is a commitment in the home to constantly improving the quality of care provided. As a result of this inspection there are two good practice recommendations.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning; in particular ensure that there is internet access available in the home (NMS 8.2)
- ensure that the methods of de-escalation attempted to avoid the need for a physical restraint are recorded in the record of restraints. (NMS 3.13)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from individualised care and support that meets all of their identified care needs. As a result of this care they grow in confidence and make good progress from their starting points. Young people who have previously lived at the home and have now left, have had good outcomes and successfully returned to live with their families. Staff are fully aware of young people's talents and interests and help them to make positive and constructive use of their leisure time at the home and in the community.

Young people enjoy good health. The home ensures that young people eat healthy and nutritious meals and learn to make healthy snacks. The health care needs of young people are fully assessed and needs relating to emotional and physical health are fully met.

Young people are encouraged and supported to engage with education and make good progress. The manager and staff understand that mainstream education may not always be appropriate. In these circumstances, alternative educational placements are sought and fully supported. Good liaison between the home and educational provision ensures that young people are given consistent care and support.

A strength of the home is the support given to young people to maintain positive links with their family. Staff fully support young people to maintain contact with family, friends and significant others. Young people's views are sought and valued regarding the day-to-day running of the home. Even at a young age, when they are too young to have a formal plan for future independent living, young people are encouraged to fully participate and take responsibility for themselves, their behaviour

and looking after the house and garden.

Quality of care

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

Young people make very good progress from their starting points. High quality care is given to young people and as a result they thrive and feel supported and well cared for. Placement plans are very detailed and clearly identify the care needs of young people and how staff are to meet these identified needs. For example, each young person has a detailed plan for each day, so they know what is happening and which staff member will be working with them. Staff succeed in constantly and consistently monitoring the progress of young people. This ensures that staff are able to assess and evaluate the progress of young people on a regular basis.

Young people are fully involved with reviewing their placement plans and this helps them to take responsibility for their behaviour and progress. Cultural needs and needs relating to individual ethnicity are fully taken into account in the care planning process. This means that young people feel valued and cared for regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. Spiritual needs are taken seriously and staff support young people to attend religious services should young people request this support.

Young people's records are very well maintained, regularly updated and easily accessible. This means that if staff require any information regarding a young person it is readily available. Staff empower young people through their open, honest and transparent ways of working. Young people said that staff listen to them and take notice of their opinions. Young people have access to an advocacy service and are invited to take part in regular house meetings. Young people's requests are taken seriously and a full explanation is given to them if a request is unable to be met by staff. Young people said that they are fully involved in planning menus and choosing activities.

Young people live in a quiet residential area on the outskirts of a small town. Young people said that they really like living at the home. Bedrooms are thoroughly personalised by young people. Photographs of young people enjoying activities and time with their family are displayed throughout the home. Young people commented that they liked this as it really made the house feel like their home. Young people enjoy playing with the numerous games and jigsaw puzzles available in the home. Internet access has not yet been installed although young people are able to access the internet at the local library. The home is well decorated and maintained. Furnishings are modern and all areas of the home are very clean. Young people said they liked the garden and have started to learn from staff about growing vegetables and flowers. This helps them to feel a sense of responsibility for the garden and to learn about growing food.

Staff undertake a proactive role in helping young people to keep in contact with their family. For example, staff support young people to visit family members and family members and friends are welcome to visit the home. A thorough assessment of a

young person is undertaken prior to their admission to the home, to ensure that their needs are able to be met at the service.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. Young people are helped to plan healthy menus and make healthy snacks. Young people said that they helped to make their school lunch boxes and were helped to put healthy food into it every day.

Health care needs of young people are fully met. Staff have a very good knowledge of individual health care needs. These needs and how they are to be met are documented in placement plans. The home has robust systems for the management of medication. Emotional and physical health care needs are fully assessed and staff ensure that young people access appropriate health care professionals such as opticians and dentists at appropriate intervals. This intervention ensures that young people obtain the health care that they need to achieve positive outcomes.

Young people have not lived at the home for very long. Staff have succeeded in engaging young people with education through a specialist educational facility and young people have made some progress from their starting point. In order to ensure that young people reach their full educational potential, staff are working with the local authority to ensure that young people are placed in a school that will fully meet and further promote their educational needs. Staff read to young people every evening before bed time and encourage young people to read books themselves.

Young people said that there are lots of activities that they enjoy in and out of the home. Staff support young people to play for local football teams and visit local attractions and parks in the community. Staff ensure that the energy of young people is channelled positively and constructively.

Relationships between staff are amiable, constructive and nurturing. Young people said 'the staff are great and I really like them.' Young people said that they knew how to make a complaint but had not needed to.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Good arrangements are in place in the home to keep young people safe. Young people said that they felt very safe living at the home. Young people have not been absent without authority and there are no issues with bullying. Staff benefit from regular training in safeguarding young people. This ensures that they are able to fully safeguard young people in their care and are aware of the procedures to take if any safeguarding concerns arise.

Staff actively promote and encourage positive behaviour. The manager ensures that there is always male and female staff on duty. This gender balance promotes positive role modelling for young people. Staff consistently and effectively maintain a reward system for young people. Young people fully understand this system to encourage positive behaviour. Occasionally staff sanction young people for inappropriate

behaviour. Young people's comments about the sanctions are recorded and evidence that they think that sanctions are fair. The effectiveness of sanctions are carefully evaluated and adjusted if necessary. Staff are fully trained in safe restraint practice. Restraints are minimal, have greatly reduced since young people were placed at the home and are only used as a last resort to ensure the safety of young people or staff. Comprehensive incident reports of de-escalation strategies that staff use prior to a restraint being necessary are documented in the incident log, but not always recorded in the record of restraints. This oversight does not have an impact on young people, or their safety.

The service is aware of the need to have a robust risk management system. Risk assessments are available for individual young people, the house and any activities that young people engage in. Young people's individual guidelines highlight behaviour management issues and how staff are to safely manage these.

Fire safety is well managed and young people have regular fire evacuation practices. Robust procedures and checks are in place at the home to ensure the health and safety of young people.

New staff are carefully checked and vetted prior to starting work at the home. The home has a robust recruitment policy and procedure. Staff confirmed that they had been appropriately checked before starting work at the home. Visitors to the home are checked by staff and a visitors' book is maintained to ensure that only appropriate people are admitted to the home. This action helps to ensure the safety of young people.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager has recently been appointed and has recently been registered with Ofsted. The home meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose for the home. The Registered Manager provides strong leadership for the experienced and consistent staff team.

Rotas evidence that there are always an appropriate number of staff on duty at all times to meet the care needs of young people in the home. High staffing ratios mean that young people's individual care needs are fully met. If required, due to sickness or leave, staff from other homes in the group work in the home. This ensures that young people know all staff really well and there is continuity and consistency in the care provided.

The manager and staff have a strong commitment to anti-discriminatory practice in the home. Staff have high aspirations for each individual young person and work hard to ensure that young people achieve well in all areas of their lives and reach their full potential. The home succeeds in providing a very well-managed and structured environment for young people.

Staff are effectively supported by the organisation and the manager. Staff undertake training in a variety of topics, ensuring that they are able to fully meet the care needs of each young person. The manager raises any training needs that arise from working with different young people so that staff are fully informed. Staff receive an annual appraisal from the manager. This ensures that their skills and experience are appropriate to fully meet the care needs of young people.

Young people benefit from effective management of the home. There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care. Young people complete a monthly survey form. This encourages young people to tell staff how they are feeling about the home and any ideas they have regarding how to improve the home. The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home. A development plan for the home details how the home plans to improve in the near future and address any weaknesses. The manager is committed to compliance with the regulations and providing a high quality of care in the home. There were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection.

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.