

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 are effectively and successfully supported by a caring and committed manager and staff team who undertake work with young people through an individualised approach that has high aspirations for them with regard to behaviour, education and health outcomes. Rules and boundaries are consistently and fairly implemented. This consistent approach encourages and helps young people to be aware of, and learn from the consequences of their actions and their behaviour.

Educational achievement is a strength of the home. Young people are appropriately placed in schools where their attendance is excellent and their educational attainment in all subjects evidences how much they have progressed with their education since being placed at the home.

Young people are very happy living at the home and couldn't think of anything that the staff could do to make the home better. The home is well furnished, decorated, homely and clean. One young person said 'I love the home as it is, the staff are brilliant.' Placing social workers commented that staff at the home provide effective and regular communication and updates about young people, and they are very happy with the quality of care provided at the home. Parents of young people complimented staff at the home on their effective behaviour management and very good care of young people.

Leadership and management of the home are strong and effective. There is a development plan for the home in place and systems are in place to monitor and further improve the quality of care provided at the home. The consistent staff team

are well trained and supervised. Records are well maintained and individual placement plans for young people detail individual care needs and how these are to be met.

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, discipline or restraint at a children's home a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose which shall include the effectiveness and any consequence of the measure (Regulation 17B(3)(f)).	06/09/2013

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people benefit from high quality individualised support that enables them to grow in confidence, stabilise their behaviour and make good progress from their starting points. Constructive use is made of leisure time. This ensures young people are involved in a wide range of activity and exercise and are positively channelling their energies. Young people are enabled to learn new skills such as football, scouting and swimming.

Young people enjoy good health, eat a healthy diet and are fully involved in learning independence skills relating to shopping and cooking. The home ensures that all health care needs are met, including being pro-active with health providers in order to obtain support for young people with their emotional health care needs.

Educational achievement of young people is very good. Young people have achieved an excellent attendance rate and made very good progress with their education. Attainment grades for young people in all subjects have risen since being at the home. Young people said 'staff make sure I get to school on time and are always talking to the teachers.'

A strength of the home is their success in helping young people to manage their behaviour positively. For example, as a result of fair but firm rules and boundaries and effective behaviour management, young people have stabilised their behaviour so successfully that they are able to now move on from the home to a foster family.

One social worker said 'my young person is now so much calmer than when they came to the home and their behaviour is so much more positive, they now have empathy with others and are able to take responsibility for their behaviour. They have also learned about the consequences of their actions.'

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a nurturing and supportive environment. Staff are guided by comprehensive, thorough and regularly updated placement plans. These plans comprehensively detail individually assessed care needs and how these needs are to be met. Placement plans contain clear aims and objectives for young people. Staff have high aspirations for young people and give good quality support in order for young people to achieve these aspirations. For example, staff expect young people to behave positively and attend and achieve well at school. Constant and consistent monitoring of plans enables staff to evaluate the progress of young people on a regular basis. Young people are fully involved in this process and are encouraged to contribute to reviews. This process helps them to take responsibility for their progress and values their contribution.

Cultural and spiritual needs are taken into account in the placement planning process. Young people are offered support to attend the church of their choice should they wish to go.

Young people's files provide a very good record of staff intervention. Staff empower young people through their sympathetic, open and transparent ways of working. Young people said staff are very good at listening to them and were always honest and truthful with them. Young people are fully involved in the day-to-day running of the home and even if they are of a young age, they are encouraged to tidy their rooms, and help with the cooking and gardening. Staff have achieved a good balance of ensuring that young people feel cared for, while promoting and encouraging them to undertake daily living skills such as cooking and cleaning that they will need in the future.

Staff succeed in helping young people stay in contact with their family and friends. For example, staff attend family weddings with young people, transport them to contact visits and welcome family members and friends into the home. Photographs of family members with young people are displayed around the home. Young people said they liked this, because it meant they could see a picture of their family wherever they were in the house.

A thorough assessment of young people is undertaken prior to their admission to the home, to ensure the service is able to meet their needs. Young people said that the staff were like their other family and that the house really felt like their home. Young people said they could not think of anything the staff could do to make the home better.

Young people live in a quiet residential estate in a small modern property, with easy access to a nearby town. Bedrooms are personalised with young people's pictures, toys and games. Young people are able to relax in a well-furnished and decorated lounge, watch television or play console games. Young people have internet access for educational purposes that is fitted with appropriate safeguards. This ensures that they do not access inappropriate web sites. Young people said they liked playing football and badminton in the garden with staff and liked helping to keep the garden tidy. The home is very well maintained and has recently been fitted with new double glazed windows as documented in the home's development plan.

Staff promote a healthy lifestyle. Exercise is encouraged and young people are supported to plan and eat healthy meals and snacks. Young people said they enjoyed the meals at the home and staff always asked them what they wanted on the menus. Meal times are a sociable occasion where young people eat with staff and take a full part in preparing the meal and clearing up afterwards.

A strength of the home has been the excellent educational attendance and achievement that young people have made from their starting points. School attendance is ninety nine per cent and one young person is described by their teacher as "top of the class." Staff support young people with any homework and help young people to look up topics of interest on the computer. For example, following a day out from the home, staff helped one young person find information about different breeds of birds they had seen.

Young people's health needs are met. Staff are pro-active in obtaining health care appointments with the dentist, doctor and optician. Young people's emotional needs have been assessed and as a result staff have been pro-active in ensuring they are on a waiting list and will receive the help they need as soon as possible.

Young people said 'I do loads of stuff here like swimming, football, scouts and cycling. Staff take me out for days and play football with me.' Young people benefit from a full range of activities that ensures that their energies are channelled positively and they are building their self-esteem by learning new skills.

Relationships between young people and staff are amiable, trusting and constructive. Young people said 'the staff are really brilliant.' Young people said that bullying is not an issue and they knew how to make a complaint if they needed to and were sure staff would sort out any concerns that they may have.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good arrangements in the home to keep young people safe. Young people report that they feel very safe living at the home and are sure that staff will always keep them safe. Young people are not absent without authority from the home and there has been no police involvement in the home. Staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures to ensure they are able to fully safeguard young people in

their care and are fully aware of procedures they should follow if they have any concerns relating to safeguarding.

Staff succeed in effectively managing the behaviour of young people. As a result young people have improved their behaviour. This means that restraints are minimal and sanctions imposed for negative behaviour have been reduced. Young people said that sanctions given are fair and they learn from them. The record of sanctions is generally well maintained though the effectiveness of individual sanctions is not always recorded by staff. Sanctions are evaluated monthly by the manager for their effectiveness and this oversight in the records has minimal impact on young people. Staff are consistent and fair in imposing rules and boundaries. Positive behaviour is rewarded and young people can earn treats and extra money. Staff have been successful in stabilising and improving young people's behaviour from their starting points and as a result, individual staffing levels have been reduced and young people are now able to move on in the near future to foster placements.

The manager and staff are aware of the need for a robust risk management system. Risk assessments are comprehensive and risk management plans are in place for individual young people, the house, and activities outside of the home.

Health and safety is well managed and young people are confident they know what to do in the event of a fire. Robust procedures and checks are in place to ensure the safety of young people and staff.

Young people benefit from a stable and consistent staff team. There have been no new appointments since the previous inspection. The home has a robust recruitment policy and procedure to ensure the safety of young people. Staff confirmed that they were appropriately checked before starting work in the home. Visitors to the home are closely monitored by staff and all visitors to the home sign the visitor's book and their identification is checked.

Leadership and management

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

The home succeeds in meeting the aims and objectives documented in their statement of purpose. There is a commitment in the home to meeting the individual needs of young people and staff are well supported by the organisation and the home's manager. Staff undertake training in a wide range of subjects such as safeguarding, restraint, food hygiene, first aid. They benefit from regular, good quality supervision and also receive an annual appraisal from the registered manager. This means that the manager is sure that staff possess the skills and knowledge that they need to successfully support young people in their care.

Rotas evidence that there is an appropriate number of staff always on duty. High staffing ratios mean that diverse individual care needs are able to be fully met. If required, due to sickness absence or annual leave, staff that young people are familiar with are available from the organisation's other care homes. This ensures

continuity and consistency for young people.

Relationships with neighbours are good and any minor issues neighbours may have with young people living in the home are immediately addressed, such as neighbours asking young people and staff not to run heavily up the stairs due to excessive noise. Young people play with neighbours' children in the area and are fully involved in community activities such as scouts and football clubs.

Young people benefit from effective management of the home. There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care. These include monthly monitoring visits from a designated person and regular checks of records by the manager. There is a commitment in the home from the manager and staff to always look to improve the quality of care given to young people. The home's development plan details time focussed improvements that are to be achieved, and any actions raised through the monthly monitoring visits are acted upon. Compliance with regulations is good, and there were no requirements or recommendations made at the previous inspection. Views from parents, young people and professionals are gathered and a formal monitoring system of these views is in place to identify any trends or concerns and address them.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.