

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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 for four young people, of either sex, between the ages of eight and 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides medium to long-term residential care and is owned by a private company.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home with a skilled and efficient staff team that supports young people to improve outcomes. Safeguarding is a high priority and young people benefit from good support systems and clear placement planning. Young people feel safe and protected from potential harm or abuse. Life skills achieved enhance the quality of care and promote the positive self-view of young people. This means young people are able to grow and mature while respecting individuals different to them. The excellent monitoring and management of the home continues to ensure good quality care for young people.

The health and well-being of young people is supported and monitored to ensure a fulfilling lifestyle. Young people's difficulties regarding attendance in education impact on outcomes of achievement and attainment. Staff provide young people with sufficient support and encourage improvement.

Young people are fully involved in the quality of care they receive, and their views and wishes are taken seriously. They contribute to the running of the home and feel the home is a nice place to live.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Some young people are making satisfactory progress in their educational achievement even though they are not in mainstream education. They undertake work at home and with the support of staff. Other young people have struggled to attend school on a regular basis and, therefore, their attainment has declined, which affects young people achieving their maximum potential.

Young people take responsibility for their health, well-being, and benefit from attending all routine health checks. This ensures that young people's health is managed with consistency. Young people maintain a healthy lifestyle through eating healthily and accessing external services to support their health and well-being.

Young people benefit from the strong and positive relationships with all staff. They

interact well, developing trust and respect and young people feel comfortable in raising issues where they need support. Young people engage in one-to-one key work meetings to address issues and evaluate behaviour. This improves self-esteem and confidence.

Young people recognise their own identity and staff work hard to support them to understand their background. As a result, young people feel a sense of belonging and are able to reflect on how they can move forward in improving their own lives and outcomes. Young people benefit from regular contact with family and friends, because significant and important relationships are preserved. Young people gain independence skills by making a positive contribution to the running of the home. They do this through carrying out a range of household chores and managing their own money.

Quality of care

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

Staff are dedicated and passionate about the care they provide. They continually strive to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Staff challenge barriers to support the full participation of young people at school in their community and wider society. Staff work closely with young people to improve school attendance and achievement, however, this has proved difficult for some young people and attainment has declined. Despite the efforts of staff to secure educational placements, not all young people are in mainstream education. This compromises young people's achievements.

Staff and young people generally have good relationships with each other. Some relationships between young people and staff are strained because of challenging behaviour. However, staff continue to remain professional and non-discriminative, putting young people central to the quality of care provided. The home works hard to promote positive behaviour. There are clear behaviour management plans in place and staff support young people by giving positive praise.

There is a complaint system and young people know how and when to make a complaint. The manager takes appropriate action to address complaints promptly and confidently, keeping all parties informed and updated. As a result, young people remain safeguarded and protected from harm. A private telephone is available should young people need to access independent advice and support about problems and concerns.

Young people express their views, feelings and opinions through regular discussions. Young people are able to raise sensitive subjects because there are forums where young people feel safe and confident. The staff value young people's views and provide feedback about their requests. This means young people feel confident, listened to, and continually provides input into the running of their home. Young people make informed choices regarding how they spend their free time that supports their independence.

Staff place young people central to their care planning and are proactive in identifying problems. Through good placement planning staff support young people to access appropriate services to maximise both their physical and mental health. For example, access to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has supported young people to develop emotional and social skills.

Staff treat young people fairly and equally. Staff fully support the diverse needs of each individual within their cultural, religious and sexual orientation. Young people accept their own identity and staff work closely with young people to fully explore areas where difficulties lie. This helps young people to recognise and accept diversity.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained and young people are actively involved in deciding appropriate décor or soft furnishings.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's safety is a priority. Young people say they feel safe and protected from harm. Staff support young people to take reasonable risks within the parameters of their day-to day living; they consider individual vulnerabilities while enabling reasonable risk to take place to promote personal growth and development. Young people benefit from clear and well-managed risk assessments that underpin staffs' management and assessment in staying safe.

Young people benefit from a highly skilled and trained staff team that welcomes the diverse needs of young people in their care. This ensures that young people continually receive the appropriate service and support while in the home. As a result of the training received by staff, the risk of exploitation, neglect and abuse is significantly reduced. Rewards are provided by means of incentives for reaching set targets and sanctions imposed where non-compliance occurs. Young people say the use of physical intervention has not been necessary and sanctions and rewards are fair and reasonable. Although there are significant incidents in regards to behaviour, staff support and assist young people to ensure their safety remains paramount.

The home protects young people from bullying and has clear policy and guidance on what constitutes bullying and how to manage and report it. Young people's privacy is respected because staff always knock before entering their bedrooms. Young people have keys to their own bedrooms, which further protects their privacy.

The home is extremely assertive when young people are missing from care. Staff take considerable care to ensure young people's safety and liaise well with external agencies, such as local police. The systems in place are effective and efficient in managing such incidents and young people comment, 'I'm treated well by staff when I return home.' This is because staff understand how to protect young people's

individual needs.

The home demonstrates that safeguarding issues remain consistently monitored, evaluated and reviewed with all agencies concerned. Staff are extremely knowledgeable in the procedures for child protection and have no hesitation in raising concerns where there is compromise to a young person's safety. Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently. This provides protection for young people, the person making the allegation and, at the same time, supports the person who is subject of the allegation. This means young people are protected and staff are supported fairly and without discrimination.

The manager ensures that regular monitoring of health and safety takes place to ensure the home is physically safe and secure. All fire maintenance checks are completed and documented well. All staff and young people are well aware of the fire procedure and what action to take in the event of a fire. As a result, young people's safety is promoted and protected.

Leadership and management

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

The leadership and management of the home is outstanding because the team are led by a proactive and efficient manager. Staff receive excellent support on a day-to-day basis from the manager through regular supervision, team meetings and appraisal that enhances personal development. The staff are very experienced and benefit from continued motivation, praise and personal development that enhances the quality of care and improves outcomes for young people.

The home is effective in managing and monitoring because robust systems highlight the home's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, young people continue to receive a good quality of care. Staff have excellent relationships with the manager built on mutual trust and respect. Young people remain the focus in the child-centred delivery of care provided by a well-managed team that are passionate and committed. Staffing levels in the home are sufficient and young people profit from a good standard of support when required to meet their needs.

Regulation 33 visits monitor the home to ensure it provides a clear and concise overview of the service. The manager effectively evaluates the home by undertaking the Regulation 34 monitoring. As a result, the home has strong development plans in place that outline the key strengths and weaknesses. There are clear timescales to meet objectives and staff address shortfalls to implement change. This ensures young people's care is continually monitored and evaluated. Records in the home are kept and maintained to a high standard and information shared on a need-to-know basis, ensuring confidentiality at all times.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

