

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pamela Nuckley
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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

This service provides integrated packages of care, therapy and education to a maximum of six children with reactive attachment difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people enjoy support from a committed, well-established, qualified, supported and well trained staff team. There are strong relationships between young people and staff; this allows therapeutic techniques and individual support to engage and enable young people to develop socially and emotionally.

Young people say they feel safe and are safe. They feel listened to and feel that they can raise any concerns. Young people recognise that there are systems in place to keep them safe and understand there are consequences to actions. Staff actively encourage the young people in education and support education by retaining progress reports and celebrating achievements. Young people enjoy a variety of activities and the home fully supports young people in having hobbies within the local community.

The home has made good progress since their last inspection and has met all requirements and recommendations set. The home is effectively managed and is currently looking at including more feedback and consultation in their documents and monitoring systems.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

All young people have educational placements in a mainstream school or at the company's school. Young people say that they are fully supported in all areas of education from helping with homework to transport to and from school. One young person says 'staff have been working really hard to try and get me a mainstream placement in a school within this area. I feel I am now ready to go to a normal school and although this may be a bit frightening I know they will help me'. All young people have good school attendance. As a result of this young people are achieving and they feel that the home values education.

Young people have contact with their parents and other significant people. Staff often transport young people to contact and sometimes supervise contact. Young

people thought that staff were really good at informing them if arrangements had changed and by taking them to contact. One young person said 'I feel really safe when staff are with me and they have helped me get through some difficult times'.

Young people say that staff listen to them and they feel that they could discuss any concerns with the staff. They said they feel safe and cared for. This has enabled young people to form good relationships with staff and has had a positive impact on their self-esteem.

Young people spoke with enthusiasm about the activities and hobbies that they do. Young people say 'I love going the park and just running around', 'I go to ballet, tap and football lessons', 'I go ice skating and I am in a competition in November'. Young people benefit from making constructive use of their free time, enjoying a healthier life style and are engaging in the wider community with their peers.

Young people are provided with a healthy diet and receive staff support in choosing a nutritious meal. Each young person contributes to the menu and they have opportunities to go shopping or help to cook the meal. Young people feel that they were physically fit as they went swimming, walking, playing football or go to the local forest to run around.

Young people have good health plans which identify any areas for concerns, appointments attended and all therapeutic services that they are receiving. This ensures that their physical, emotional and psychological health needs are addressed quickly and young people say that they have benefit from the services they have received.

Staff are excellent in collecting memorabilia for young people's memory boxes. Young people say that they have a better understanding of their background and that these boxes will be helpful in them understanding their past when they are older.

Quality of care

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

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Young people's bedrooms are personalised and decorated to their liking. As a consequence young people take pride in their rooms and belongings.

Young people feel that staff supported them with their cultural identity and one young person said 'I like to go to church and staff take me every Sunday'. This shows that the home embraces young people as individuals and young people feel valued due to this.

Staff believe that it is important to engage young people in different activities and hobbies. They showed that they actively looked at what was on offer in the community and gave all young people different options for hobbies regardless of

attributes. As a result, all young people were enthusiastic about their activities and hobbies and they feel that they had benefited from them in terms of confidence and exercise.

Staff excel in supporting young people in education. They do this by transporting them, attending progress meetings or evening, assisting young people with home work and attending sports days. They also feel it was extremely important to celebrated any achievement. As a consequence of all this young people say that staff are really good around education and they feel that they have made good progress.

Staff manage medication safely. All staff are trained in first aid and in medication procedures. The records show clear recordings of medication given, whether it is refused, the disposal of and any likely side effects or contra-indications. The home ethos is one of a therapeutic input with a nurturing environment. Young people receive services from counsellors and psychologists. Therefore, young people receive a holistic care package and young people said that these services have improved all aspects of there health.

Young people said that they are aware of and cared for in line with their placement plan. They feel that their progress was recorded well and all young people thought that key worker sessions were beneficial. One young person said 'I know that I can discuss anything with my key worker and she will always give me advice'. This shows that young people feel listened to and have opportunities to discuss their care plan and any progress they have made.

Young people say that they know how to make a complaint or can talk about any concerns that they may have. Young people said 'Staff record anything you say if it sounds like a complaint or concern and record it, they still look at it even if you say it ok', 'I have made a complaint, it was a bit silly but the manager still took it seriously and I am happy with the outcome'. The home has a high number of complaints but this is because they take all complaints both verbally and in writing and address any small dissatisfaction seriously. This system enables young people to express their opinions and they say they feel valued because of it.

Young people feel that they had some say over the running of the home, such as decoration or furnishing of the home. The manager has plans to further improve consultation with young people, parents and social workers.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff have a good approach to meet the health and safety requirements of the home. All appliances, utilities and maintenance is carried out regularly. Young people are aware of the fire procedure and carry out evacuations with staff regularly. This ensures that young people are cared for within a safe environment.

Staff said that they have regular supervision, training, appraisal and support. The

staff team feels that this is beneficial to them and is reflected in the positive outcomes for young people. The home's high staffing levels provide good opportunities for supervision of young people, one-to-one time with young people and for individual activities with young people. All staff are well trained and the majority of staff have a suitable qualification in caring for young people. The home has a good recruitment procedure and all staff are vetted before commencing work at the home. As a result young people say they feel that they are safe.

Young people have robust individual risk assessments and these are incorporated into good behaviour management plans. Young people rarely go missing but when they do staff search the local area and follow the correct reporting procedures. All staff stated that their main concern was the safety of the young person and that on their return they were responded to positively. Young people say that they have not run away because there is no need to but feel that staff would be worried about them and look after them on return.

Staff implement positive behaviour strategies in line with therapeutic approaches to support young people in developing skills to managing conflict and developing positive relationships. Young people are placed at this home due to the trauma or experience they have gone through. There is a high number of restraints within the home, but these are appropriate to keep young people safe. The documents show all reporting and recording procedures are followed. One young person said 'I do get restrained but it is only when I am putting myself in danger like trying to break furniture or windows'. All young people thought that the staff were very good at keeping them safe and that any restraint was because they were out of control. They also said that staff always discuss this with them afterwards and try to find out what brought the restraint about. Young people receive consequences for negative behaviour, however these are minimal and restorative. The home also has a positive reward system in place and young people say they can earn points for music albums etc. Young people feel this was important to show them there was good and bad consequences for their actions.

All staff have received training in child protection and all staff were very clear on their roles and responsibilities in reporting and recording any incidents. The home has good links with the police and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and any incidents are reported quickly, efficiently and in a way that provides effective protection for young people.

Young people say that there have been no incidents of bullying within the home and that they feel confident that staff would deal with any bullying issues straight away and fairly.

Leadership and management

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

The home offers care and accommodation in line with its Statement of Purpose. Social workers confirmed receipt of the home's Statement of Purpose and feel that they are fully informed of all progress and incidents relating to their young person promptly. Young people say that they are welcomed into the home positively and receive a welcome book which staff go through with them explaining the rules, boundaries expectations. One young person said 'I have only been here a short while but everything is good and I visited the home first and the staff came to see me and I got a book on what the home is like'. This ensures that all parties understand the care provided by the home.

External monitoring of the quality of care provided by the home is carried by an external manager of the company. The documents show that parents and young people are consulted. The manager also carries out a monthly monitoring check and has recently put into place a development plan for the home. This monitoring ensures that the manager has a grasp of the strengths of the service and any areas that need improvement and that young people make good progress because of the effective management systems that are in place.

The home is well resourced to ensure that young people have good, trained and qualified staff to meet their needs. This also allows for young people to have access to good activities, hobbies, contact with their parents and education opportunities.

The staff team are enthusiastic about their work and are committed to supporting young people to achieve good outcomes. There are good systems in place for supervision and staff meetings which allows for discussion on young people's development. There are good arrangements for future training and the company embraces staff development through the availability of formal qualifications. Any new staff benefit from a thorough induction. These measures mean that young people experience a consistent approach and benefit from a well-trained and qualified staff team who are enabled to provide good quality and safe care.

The manager and staff team talk enthusiastically about the work they do and the good outcomes young people have achieved since joining them or when young people leave. They recognise that they have some areas to improve in but the manager is already addressing these, for example devising a form to seek young people's opinions within the appraisal system.

Young people's files are well structured and are held securely and confidentially. They cover all that is required in the regulations. There have been some incidents requiring notification and these incidents have been received promptly. The manager has kept up to date with all new legislation and practice developments and has shared this with staff, for example, ensuring staff are familiar with the new national minimum standards.

The home has addressed all previous requirements and recommendations and none were set as a result of this inspection.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.