

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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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 provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

The experience of young people who live here is the hallmark of the quality of the service. They comment: 'I love it here, it's outstanding and staff really care'. The staff are passionate about their work and young people's development is at the forefront of practice. They champion young people's needs and rights to ensure they gain the help, advice and support required to reach their full potential.

External resources such as therapeutic services ensure a robust network to guide young people in making positive progress in their lives. Young people have excellent relationships with staff who know them extremely well, consequently young people feel confident, inspired and safe.

Young people live in a safe, caring and homely environment that supports them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. They achieve better outcomes in their education, safety, health, social and emotional development. Young people like living at the home and exercise choice and responsibility through excellent consultation. All young people have detailed placement plans that are reviewed and focus upon their individual needs.

The home is effectively managed with a strong emphasis upon providing high standards of care. Excellent monitoring scrutinises the quality of care and plans are on going for improvement. Anti-discriminatory practice runs through all aspects of the day to day care and young people understand their background and identity. Further improvement is required to ensure the behaviour management plans clearly highlight the use of restraint as a last resort. Additionally, the children's guide requires updating to ensure young people have information on how to contact independent advocacy and advice.

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 the use of restraint is clearly set out in the home's behaviour management plans (NMS 3.14)
- ensure that the children's guide includes information on how young people can contact the Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director and how to secure access to an independent advocate. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people achieve excellent outcomes across all aspects of their development, which helps them grow in confidence. Staff promote young people's independence and they are encouraged to take appropriate risks and responsibility for their age and understanding. They are involved in the daily running of the home and staff work with them individually to build resilience and self esteem. These practices help equip young people with the skills and competence for adulthood.

Young people take part in a range of activities including horse riding, swimming, after school clubs, bowling and holidays which helps to promote their physical health and wellbeing. They are registered with medical practitioners and have detailed plans to meet their particular health needs. Young people are educated in a variety of health and wellbeing matters, including sexual health and drug and alcohol misuse. Furthermore, individual key worker sessions compliment young people's learning to ensure they have the knowledge to make informed decisions. These practices ensure young people enjoy excellent health.

Staff promote and value young people's educational achievement. Staff have constructive relationships with school and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure they get the support they need. They have an excellent record of school attendance and achieve their potential. Young people are encouraged to learn at home and staff assist them with their home work and spend time reading with them. Individual school reports highlight exceptional progress including young people undertaking GCSE examinations early.

Staff work closely with placing authorities to ensure contact is positive, safe and enjoyable. They facilitate contact and encourage family to maintain relationships with young people. Staff value the importance of contact for young people in understanding their background and heritage. They are also aware of the emotional impact of contact upon young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people thrive in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. Young people comment: 'I feel safe and cared about, staff are brilliant'. They enjoy positive relationships with staff who have an excellent understanding of their individual needs. Detailed care planning, preparation and review contributes to the excellent standards of care received by young people.

Young people are involved in the daily running of the home and their views are sought and responded to regularly. Young people know how to raise a complaint and feel confident to do so. They comment: 'I say if I'm not happy, but I have had nothing to complain about, if I did they would sort it out'. These practices empower young people to have control in their own daily lives. The children's guide is available, although it requires updating to include further information on how to access advice and support from independent sources including the Children's Rights Director.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities with friends and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual beliefs and a range of events are available to promote young people's understanding of diversity. The home provides a variety of foods from wholesome traditional British dishes to international cuisine. Young people assist to prepare the home's menu and food to encourage their understanding of nutrition and cultural traditions.

Staff engage with school on a daily basis to champion young people's educational achievement. As a result young people's attendance is excellent and their progress is exceptional. Staff emphasise the value of education and provide learning experiences to compliment their education. These practices help young people achieve their potential and experience success and pride.

Young people live in comfortable and homely accommodation that blends into the neighbourhood. The home is clean, decorated and furnished to a good standard. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests. They have space and privacy to see family and friends and to do their homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are effectively safeguarded and feel safe from harm. Staff receive safeguarding training and have an excellent understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Staff policies and procedures are in place to ensure a robust response to any allegation or disclosure of abuse. Constructive and warm relationships between staff and young people and consistent boundaries provide the basis for managing behaviour successfully. Methods such as incentives and consequences encourage young people's participation. They comment 'I think they are firm but fair.' Young people's engagement in the process ensures that sanctions are appropriately used and assists them to accept responsibility for their actions. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and there are no incidents of bullying and young people rarely go missing from home.

Staff receive appropriate training in order to safely manage physical intervention within the home including guidance from trained therapist in understanding complex behaviours. Staff are clear that physical intervention is only used to prevent a young person harming themselves or others. However, the behaviour management plans require updating to explicitly detail the home's policy and practice of using physical restraint as a very last resort only. Where physical intervention has been used, clear records detail the action taken, the duration and the debrief offered to young people. Robust monitoring systems take place to examine trends and emerging patterns to inform future practice and continually improve the care of young people.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered. Written records clearly show that staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitor's identity to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from an experienced and suitably qualified staff team. A thorough recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. Staff are subject to an induction and probationary period of work to further ensure their competence in caring for young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed in their best interests. The service meets the aims and objectives of the statement of purpose and young people, staff and social workers are clear about the aims and facilities of the home. The registered manager and two senior workers make up the management team. Together they provide clear leadership and accountability and work closely with staff and young people to ensure the smooth running of the home.

Quality assurance systems are in place to monitor the care received by young people, these include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. The management team are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and requirements and recommendations are promptly followed up and implemented. Developmental plans are on going and show a commitment to young people for improvement.

Staff are very well supported by a management team who are hands-on and open in their expectations and pursuit of excellence. Staff are suitably qualified and have a wealth of experience in working with young people. They have regular supervision, appraisals, team meetings and training opportunities that contribute to their competence in providing excellent care to young people. They confirm that the manager is available to them and that they enjoy the work they do.

Staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have high expectations for young people. They understand young people's individual strengths and needs and encourage them to reach their potential. Staff have regular training in equality and diversity and have easy access to policies and literature to inform their knowledge. Recording of information is excellent and provides a picture of young people's daily lives. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.