

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Monica Farrimond
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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

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Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points, physically, mentally, socially and educationally. The home takes positive steps to meet the diverse and complex needs of the young people placed. Staff ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs. Staff have very good knowledge of the young people they are working with, ensuring their needs are consistently met. The home values the rights of individuals to respect and dignity. Young people are able to make their views known and have a say in what happens in the home. They are involved in decisions about what food they eat, what they do in their spare time, how the house is decorated and the plans for their future. Professional and personal boundaries with young people are clear and are consistent with good childcare.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the result of all statutory reviews and reviews of Placement Plans are recorded on the child's file, and individuals responsible for pursuing actions at the home arising from the reviews are clearly identified. (NMS 25).

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Documentation produced by the staff is of a high quality; equality and diversity is used to promote each young person's individuality. Young people living at this home are treated and respected as individuals in their own right and benefit from individualised care to address their unique needs and personal preferences. Staff support young people well and build positive relationships with them, which encourages self-esteem and confidence. As a result, young people gain good knowledge and understanding of their own background, they adapt well to new situations and their view of themselves is positive.

Young people's physical health is promoted by the staff and young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. They take part in physical activities including playing football, walking and swimming. Young people are registered with a General Practitioner, receive dental and optical treatment and have individual plans to target their health needs. Staff receive training in meeting young people's health needs, and this ensures that staff can effectively address a wide range of health-related issues which may arise during a young person's placement at the home.

The educational outcomes for young people based on their starting points when first admitted, are good. Young people receive excellent support to maintain their education. Staff get involved with their education reviews and daily class experiences. Many of the young people living at the home have had some past difficulties relating to education. Staff liaise well with schools, colleges, teachers and training projects. They ensure that any identified education needs are met and addressed. Self-esteem is consciously promoted in the form of verbal support, rewards and praise; staff show genuine interest in young people's lives and motivate young people through positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

Young people participate in regular meetings between themselves and staff. They have individual key worker sessions and daily informal conversations. These steps ensure young people actively contribute to their current and future plans, and enable them to have their say about the daily running of the home.

All young people have beneficial and appropriate contact with family, friends and other significant adults. Staff appreciate the importance of these contacts and do everything they can to promote and sustain these vital links. They are skilled in helping to support young people when difficulties, problems and rejection arise. Young people confirm that they are helped to keep in touch with people that are important to them, and that they can have friends and family come to visit them. Practical and financial support is offered to improve the outcomes of sustained contact. This is done safely and sensitively.

Young people learn new things and develop their independence because they receive a consistent level of help and support. The home has developed its own life skills programme, which enhances the successful transition to adulthood. Young people gain many competencies suited to their preparation for independence because of the quality of experience provided by the home. Young people are encouraged to take part in meal preparation and to prepare their own snacks. In addition, young people are also encouraged to participate in budgeting and shopping. Young people are supported to develop a positive self-image and to be aware of their own personal hygiene needs. Staff adopt a sensitive approach to this and support young people to be as independent as possible. This helps to prepare young people for their transition into adulthood and independent living.

Quality of care

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

Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people in the home. The home's extensive and regularly updated care planning documentation clearly identifies individual needs, which include the identity, religious and cultural aspects of young people's lives. However, documentation relating to previous statutory reviews is not obtained and therefore it is not possible to assess whether previous actions raised have been met. This makes it difficult to assess whether goals, identified at a statutory review, have been attained and the needs of the young person met. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and these are based on mutual respect and trust. These relationships provide a firm base to understanding young people and promoting their development. The young people value staff's support and guidance; this promotes good behaviour and helps young people to develop their self-esteem.

Young people have comprehensive behaviour management plans, which show triggers to behaviour and strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Staff and young people say there are no issues or conflicts and that relationships with each other are positive. There are excellent links with education services, health care and transitional support that help to coordinate a package of support which is reflective of a young person's needs.

Young people say their views are sought and acted upon. Staff encourage them to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run; this makes the young people learn that what they say is important, and builds their self-esteem and confidence. If young people are unhappy about any aspect of their lives they talk to staff. Young people know how to complain and trust that staff will listen and act upon any concerns. Staff provide many opportunities for informal daily discussions and key working sessions.

Young people's health needs are managed appropriately. Young people live in a healthy environment in which their physical, emotional and social well-being are promoted. Young people have access to health care services, and are also encouraged to take responsibility for their own health care needs; this encourages personal development and is good preparation for independence. There is guidance available within the home on a range of health and social issues including the dangers of smoking, sexual health and alcohol and substance misuse. These issues are discussed with the young people in a sensitive manner by staff, and help to ensure the young people have the knowledge to keep themselves safe. All staff receive appropriate training to support health and well-being and this improves the quality of care being provided. Staff involve young people in nutritional menu planning and researching meals from other cultures to encourage their appreciation of different traditions, and to promote healthy eating.

Staff promote young people's achievement in education and have made good relationships with schools and social workers. Young people attend school, work experience and alternative educational provision regularly, and make outstanding progress. Staff emphasise the value of education and provide learning and experiences to complement their education. Young people thrive in a supportive and

nurturing environment. Staff encourage young people to plan their recreation time effectively and engage in purposeful and enjoyable leisure activities. There is a wide range of activities to occupy their recreation time, and individual interests are encouraged. Staff support young people to develop their confidence by establishing relationships outside the home and pursuing personal interests. This enables young people to experience success and pride in themselves.

The home is located on a large council estate, close to all amenities. The home is well maintained, appropriately decorated and furnished to meet the needs of the young people. Young people live in a relaxed and homely environment with ample space for private time alone. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Good systems are in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive regular training to update their knowledge and have a full understanding of safeguarding policies, procedures and actions they should take, if an incident arises. Policy and procedural guidance has been established that is consistent with Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures. Young people confirm that they are safe and happy living at the home. Good staffing levels ensure that young people are well supervised. Individual risk assessments and placement plans inform staff of how to manage any concerns that might arise for young people within the local community.

There is a clear protocol for staff to follow in the event of a young person going missing from the home. The robust implementation of this protocol by staff means young people are protected. There are currently very few incidents of young people going missing from the home; incidents have reduced significantly and are monitored and managed well. There are systems in place to minimise the risks wherever possible. The welfare of the young people is paramount. If a young person goes missing, staff use their knowledge of the local area, together with the young person's risk assessments, to try and ensure a speedy return of the young person.

The home's procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are robust. All staff are thoroughly vetted before they are appointed to ensure that they are safe to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The manager of the home is experienced and appropriately qualified. Staff are provided with a range of training, including mandatory courses in safeguarding, first aid and the administration of medication. The manager ensures that time is available for all staff to attend training and they are encouraged to apply for all relevant courses; this ensures that staff are

able to take advantage of the knowledge obtained on those courses to further promote the welfare of the young people. This also ensures that young people are cared for by staff who are continually striving to improve and develop their knowledge and understanding of their role.

All staff working at the home have a qualification in caring for children and young people, or are working towards this qualification. This ensures consistency in working practices wherever possible. Staff at the home feel supported and valued and describe staff moral as high. The manager has a comprehensive development plan in place, which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Staffing levels are good, which ensure that young people are properly supervised and they are able to take part in activities. Rotas allow staff sufficient time to undertake individual work with young people, to attend regular team meetings and to complete necessary paperwork. This ensures that the staff can spend more time with the young people, and less time completing paperwork in the office.

All staff have regular supervision sessions with their line manager; this ensures that staff development and training needs are identified and promoted. Staff demonstrate a clear determination to promote inclusion for young people and to encourage them to develop their skills.

The manager and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to reviewing and improving the service that is offered to young people and their families. Team meetings are used to look at practice issues and the needs of the young people. This ensures that all staff are aware of any issues relating to young people's behaviour and approach these issues in a consistent manner.

The home has monthly inspections by a person independent of the home to assess the quality of care provided and the manager acts upon the outcome and findings. The manager undertakes monthly monitoring and uses this as part of the overall quality assurance process for the improvement of the home and the care of young people. One requirement and three recommendations were made following the last inspection; these related to the recording and effectiveness of sanctions, risk assessments, and obtaining a full assessment of children's histories. The requirement relating to sanctions and recommendations relating to risk assessments have been fully addressed, but the recommendation relating to the home obtaining full information relating to young people's histories has not been addressed. The absence of copies of previous statutory review documentation, impacts on the knowledge staff have of previous placements, and the needs and goals identified previously for the young person accommodated.

Information that is held on young people is thorough, so that their needs can be met. All sensitive information is securely stored, so that confidentiality is maintained. Information is easily accessible to all staff, which helps to ensure that care is consistent and in line with the young person's care plan.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

