

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 one of five children's homes owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care for two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is an outstanding service supported by highly efficient staff providing excellent care and support to young people. Staff are well trained and skilled in delivering highly personalised care to meet their diverse needs. Young people are supported to maximise their full potential within their own capabilities encouraged by a dedicated and motivated staff team. They receive effective support in education and health care reflective of their individual need. The home provides a nurturing environment to help young people develop and grow. Young people experience exceptional outcomes as a result of robust and detailed placement planning.

Young people have excellent relationship with the Registered Manager and staff, encompassed with care, respect and trust. Their view and wishes are captured through regular consultation that influences the running of the home. Young people say they are happy and feel happy. The quality of care young people receive is excellent.

Safeguarding is regarded as a high priority and measures are in place to monitor and review young people's welfare. Leaders and managers are ambitious and continually strive hard to improve the quality of care and outcomes for young people. Young people are safe and say they feel safe. The home has robust and effective streamlined systems in place to promote safety. However, the fire fighting plan needs updating. Staff are highly effective in managing behaviour and the use of physical intervention is rare, however, when used there are shortfalls in some documentation. The home presents a welcoming homely feel and reflects a caring and nurturing environment. The outside exterior wall needs repair.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
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32 (2001)	the registered person shall take adequate precautions against the risk of fire, including the provision of suitable fire equipment, this is in relation to the location of the fire extinguishers (Regulation 32(1)(a))	02/09/2011
31 (2001)	the registered person shall ensure that all parts of the children's home used by young people are of sound construction and kept in good repair externally and internally, this is in relation to the garden wall.(Regulation 31(2)(d))	02/09/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure where there has been physical restraint, young people are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner. (NMS 3.16)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting point. They develop and thrive in this service and as a result are confident, helpful and polite. Young people improve their self-esteem and understanding of themselves by support received from staff who continually provide opportunities to explore and understand who they are. As a result young people have matured and developed strong relationships with staff and peers. A family support worker said, 'young people are always positive about their care and confidence has grown as a result.' Young people say they have achieved a lot since first arriving to the home and feel proud to now be in full time education. As a result of the hard work staff invested into securing a suitable placement in education, young people have maintained excellent attendance and achieved numerous certificates and awards which clearly demonstrate the positive outcomes.

Young people's health including physical, emotional and psychological is actively supported and young people attend regular appointments with their optician, dentist and doctor. They are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and as a result are fit and well. The looked after children nurse commented, 'young people receive excellent health care support from dedicated care staff, the home has an excellent health care policy.' Young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle which improves mental well-being and confidence. Young people have improved personal milestones such as learning to swim as a result of regular attendance at a swimming club.

Staff say young people have made fantastic progress in their education attendance

and achievement. Young people have maintained regular attendance and as a result received certificates in recognition. A recent invitation to attend an awards ceremony for, 'settling in' and 'coping well with the move to a new school.' Young people say, 'I love school' and now benefit from out of school activities by way of summer school club. Staff have successfully supported and provided opportunities to learning during the long period of time that no education provision was in place. As a result young people made the transition into full time education with confidence and enthusiasm.

Gentle progress is made into preparing for transition into adulthood due to the individual needs of young people, however, young people benefit from understanding how to manage independence and work with staff to develop key skills. Young people make a positive contribution to the home and community and are polite and considerate to others around them. They recognise the impact of positive behaviour and act with respect and dignity when out in the community.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them. Young people understand the importance of maintaining contact and the reasons why specific measures are in place to support the contact. As a result important relationships are maintained and given the opportunity to grow.

Quality of care

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

This home provides outstanding quality of care by staff who place the well-being of individual young people at the centre of their practice irrespective of the challenges they present. Young people develop, thrive and progress in this service. They make exceptional progress with support from staff. The relationships are built on care, trust and respect and it is clear that the bonds are strong between staff and young people. Young people are assisted to build positive relationships with staff and peers and as a result demonstrate excellent courteous manners that reflect the continuity of care and positive role modelling received

The staff are extremely knowledgeable of the needs of young people and have high aspirations for their future in the home. Staff are extremely proactive and innovative in supporting education. Young people attend school and achieve their goals supported by a highly motivated staff team. The staff strive to maximise the full potential of young people and challenge barriers that have a potential to affect educational achievement. Their achievements are celebrated and staff actively encourage young people to reach higher in their own aspirations, as a result young people grow in confidence and achieve their goals.

The views, wishes and feelings of young people are actively encouraged and they participate in regular meetings. The home consults very well with young people to ensure they influence the running of the home. Young people feel listened to. External partners also capture the views of young people through consultation, for example, advocacy services and Regulation 33 visitor. This means young people

remain central in planning for their futures. Young people are supported to understand where it is not possible to act upon their wishes. Staff are sensitive to individual needs and deliver explanations at a level tailored to personal need. This is a result of mutual respect, trust and honesty.

Young people know how to complain because staff have a clear and accessible procedure to support the process. They are confident that any concerns raised will be responded to in a timely manner. Staff provide a calm and nurturing environment within the home to enable young people to feel safe in raising worries or concerns. Young people say they are happy and as a result no complaints have been made.

Young people receive excellent support in accessing education and health services. Their physical, emotional and psychological well-being is central to their care planning and staff fully support and challenge barriers that young people face. There are excellent links with education and health services and staff work with dedication and commitment to ensure the best possible outcomes. Young people are provided with a range of purposeful and enjoyable activities that reflect their personality and individuality. Staff actively promote diversity and encourage young people to openly express their beliefs and engage in activities that enable young people to feel comfortable about who they are.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Young people benefit from a comfortable environment which is maintained well. However, the home needs to address the issue regarding the neighbour's garden wall which requires repair insofar as negotiating when the repair will commence. Both the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual are aware of the problem and endeavour to resolve it with consent from the neighbour. Young people are provided their own bedroom which ensures their privacy and they benefit from a spacious garden.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people's safety takes priority in delivery of their care. Young people benefit from a secure and safe environment, young people say they feel very safe at the home. They know how to keep themselves safe and take part in regular fire drills. The home provides young people with opportunities to experience and take reasonable risk as part of their growth and development. They benefit from clear and well managed risk assessments that underpin the management and assessment in staying safe.

The home protects young people from the risk of bullying and has clear policy and guidance on what constitutes bullying and how to manage and report it. Young people say they are not bullied in the home, however, experiences of bullying have occurred in school. The home provided a prompt and proactive response to the complaint of bullying in school and liaised with the school who dealt efficiently and effectively with the issue. As a result young people have a strong sense of safety and

well-being. Young people are protected from the risk of potential harm and staff undertake room searches where necessary. Young people have not undergone any room searches as a result of the clear guidelines and firm boundaries in place. Young people's privacy is protected and staff are respectful and always knock before entering their room. Young people are aware they can have their own key but choose not to due to the single occupancy in the home. Staff say no one enters a young person's room without them being present.

The home is highly effective in ensuring young people remain safe. Due to the nature of young people resident in the home absconding and going missing from the home is highly unlikely. However, the home has robust procedures of what to do in the event of any episode of missing and has clear joint protocol policy with the local authority and police should this occur.

Young people's behaviour is promoted and they benefit from positive reward systems that encourage and maintain safe and positive behaviour. The home has incentive charts to allow young people to develop acceptable behaviour through positive reward. For example, completion of the chore chart results in a choice of additional activities, negative behaviour results in the loss of privileges such as the television. This system works well and as a result physical intervention has only occurred on one occasion. The use of restraint is for the minimum period and uses the minimum force possible. Staff are skilled and trained in managing behaviour and follow guidance and policy to ensure safe practice. However, there is no record to demonstrate that young people are offered the choice to see a medical practitioner following restraint.

Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for young people. Staff receive excellent training to ensure they are equipped to respond to any concern relating to child protection or safeguarding. Staff know how to respond which promotes the welfare and safety of young people.

Staff working with young people in the home are carefully selected and vetted. All staff have undergone the necessary checks to ensure they are suitable to work with young people before employment begins. The home has robust systems in place that maximise the safety of young people and reduce the risk of exposure to unsuitable candidates. Where there are shortfalls in staffing levels staff from other homes within the company are used, without compromise to their own service. This maintains continuity of care and keeps young people safe.

The manager ensures that regular monitoring of health and safety takes place to make sure the home is physically safe and secure. All fire and maintenance checks are completed and well documented, staff and young people are well aware of the fire procedure and what action to take in the event of a fire. However, the location of the fire hydrants does not compare with the fire plan and some hydrants are located in the upstairs office.

Leadership and management

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

This is an outstanding service that provides young people with a high level of care. The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The Registered Manager is supported by a team of care staff and a deputy. The staff team are fully committed, motivated and driven to deliver the best possible outcomes for young people. This is a result of efficient management that actively promotes development within the work force and provides opportunities for staff to enhance their skills. As a result the young people receive quality care. Staff say they all work well as a team and managers are excellent.

The home continues to sustain improvement and managers communicate high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement through regular discussion in meetings and supervision. The enthusiasm of the manager cascades down to all staff and highly influences service delivery. There were no recommendations set at the last inspection and the home has improved practice in Regulation 34 monitoring. For example, deputy managers undertake the Schedule 6 monitoring to improve their skill and develop knowledge in preparation for further career development, all reports are checked by the manager and feedback provided to the staff. As a result staff feel valued and trusted. Young people are consulted with as part of quality assurance this ensures they contribute to the service. The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. The home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the service.

Staff receive quality training and are supported to access additional resources to enhance personal development. Staff benefit highly from regular supervision which monitors performance and evaluates and reflects best practice. This means young people continually benefit from highly skilled and knowledgeable staff.

The home's records are maintained to a high standard, are clear, stored securely, and contribute to the understanding of the young people's life. All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the home are notified by the Registered Manager of the home to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident. However, there have been no notifications since the previous inspection.

There are clear development plans in place that indicate the home's strengths and weaknesses. The manager actively updates the plan at regular intervals to ensure it is effective in addressing areas for improvement.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.