

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maria McGranaghan
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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 medium to long-term care for up to four young people who are of primary school age on admission. It caters for children and young people who have an attachment disorder or attachment difficulty. All admissions are planned.

The home is domestic in appearance. It provides a child-friendly environment with space for young people to follow their individual interests.

Young people are well integrated into schools located within the area and participate in a variety of community based leisure activities and pursuits.

As well as providing residential provision, the organisation can provide individual therapeutic programmes. All such activities take place away from the home environment. It is the responsibility of placing authorities who purchase therapeutic packages for a young person, to ensure they are appropriate to meet individual needs.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people live in a safe, caring and structured environment that supports them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. Young people are achieving outstanding outcomes in education, healthy lifestyles, safety, emotional resilience and making a positive contribution within the community.

Young people benefit from very well-planned and personalised care. Clear and detailed placement plans include essential information that ensures the young people are cared for consistently and in line with their individual needs. Staff work together with external services to play a key role for young people, this ensures young people get the right help, guidance and support. Young people's consultation is highly regarded and their views are central to the overall running of the home. Staff actively seek young people's views about all aspects of their care. They listen to each young person's opinion, suggestions, moans and groans and always take young people seriously and their opinions into account. One young person said 'I love it here, I really do. This is my dream come true, just what I have been praying for, I love it'.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff. The high staff ratio ensures that each young person is afforded the care and attention they need in order to feel safe and secure in the home. One young person said, 'They are really nice and kind and they make me laugh, they can be really funny sometimes'. Staff receive

regular training, supervision and support and this is complemented by the home having a strong and stable staff team. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's needs and are consistent in offering a nurturing environment for young people to thrive and grow.

The home is effectively managed and the manager places a strong emphasis on providing a high standard of child care practice and continuous improvement and development. Excellent monitoring systems ensure that care is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with the needs of the young people. Where safety is a concern the manager operates a 'red flag' system. This ensures the exact processes are followed in order to maintain the young people's safety. Young people said, 'they talk to you all the time, they read to you and explain things to you, if you go out they follow you to make sure you are ok and help you to come back. I feel safe here and I know they want me to be safe'.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people are making excellent progress in their education, emotional resilience and their trust in the staff who work at the home. They receive excellent support through external services such as psychologists and counsellors. This enables them to make sense of their lives and begin to understand their individual circumstances. Weekly individual key-worker sessions enable young people and their keyworker to come together and review their care needs. In addition staff attend monthly consultation meetings with external services in order to effectively support the work undertaken with the young people.

Young people are supported to develop skills in areas of personal hygiene, shopping and choosing clothes and personal requisites. Young people enjoy planning the weekly menu and are skilled in their understanding of healthy food and lifestyle. The staff ensure that each young person has a chosen hobby, including skiing, running and swimming and they enjoy long country walks and bike rides promoting healthy and active lifestyles. Young people are encouraged to make friends in the community in order to develop their social skills. As a result, all young people have external friends who they invite to play or for tea on a regular basis. Young people 'play out' with other children in the community and this helps to promote a sense of ownership within the home. Young people benefit from effective and consistent health care. The health care plan provides detailed information from birth to the present day and includes a summary of all doctors, dentists and other appointments attended by the young people. Young people have access to good health information including a children's guide to puberty, diversity and faith. This supports young people's day-to-day learning within the home and addresses age appropriate curiosity in a suitable way.

Young people living at the home have a recorded range of difficulties in their attendance of education. However, the young people all receive full time education and a 100% attendance record. Individual school reports highlight exceptional progress for all young people with some now moving into mainstream high school. One young person said, 'I do reading every night after school with the staff, I never used to like doing that, but I like it here because that's what everybody does'. The staff promote education offering time and commitment enabling young people to make consistent progress and gain the ability to recognise their own achievements.

Young people benefit from planned and supported contact with family and friends. Detailed placement plans ensures that contact only takes place with whom it has been agreed and this is reviewed on a regular basis.

The staff encourage young people to develop independence skills in accordance with their age. This does not deter from the nurturing environment young people thrive within. Simple tasks such as helping set the table, clearing away the pots and developing good personal care enable young people to develop a sense of pride.

Quality of care

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

Young people are thriving in a stable, nurturing and supportive environment. One young person said, 'I love everything, the home, the staff, the kids, the food, everything. I would have liked to have come here a long time ago'. Staff display clear warmth for the young people and this is evident when young people return from school greeting the staff with hugs. Young people are genuinely happy in the company of staff.

Staff promote consistent aspirations for the young people. They are fully committed to ensuring that each young person has the best opportunities and can achieve their full potential. This results in young people wanting to achieve and consequently they make exceptional progress within education and sustain good peer friendships within the community.

The care planning for young people is exceptional. Plans detail a clear picture of young people's needs and what steps are being taken to address their needs consistently and appropriately. Access to external support agencies, specialising in attachment disorder ensure that young people are receiving the right level of individual care in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Young people's care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure the care offered is consistently meeting their individual needs. Any changes are discussed with the young people through the consultation process inviting honest feedback about the care they receive. A staff member said 'it is great here, we are very close and we all want what is best for the young people. There is a wide age range such as the younger staff in their twenties and in their thirties and there are the older one's who do a lot of the nurturing like a grandma. It is surprising that young people still love, round and round the garden, peek a boo, cuddles and story time'.

Young people feel their wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home. One young person said, 'I just tell them, they listen to me and we talk to others about it. They sent me pictures in a photo album of the home, who lives there and the staff and I know it was the place for me. They also sent me the children's book and that tells you all about the home'.

Young people confirm they know how to complain and how to access information to assist them to do this. Information is available in the young people's guide and notice board within the home and includes contact numbers for external agencies. The positive relationship between staff and young people ensures that the young people's views are valued and that they feel confident to raise matters. One young person said 'it's all in a book. I would tell staff or my social worker or write it down. I complained at my last home, I know what to do and the staff have showed me as well'. There have been no complaints since the last full inspection.

Young people's heritage is given high priority and is central to the day-to-day practice in the home. Foods from different nations, surname shields and colonial histories enable all young people to celebrate their own identity whilst sharing others. Staff said 'we promote each individual's heritage by having special meals such as 'beasties in the glen' and jerk chicken. We celebrate special days such as St

Andrew's day and St Patrick's Day and we had a big party for the royal wedding. We find making them a part of everything helps and giving them simple tasks enables them to understand a little about our diverse nation'.

Staff have an excellent knowledge of the young people living in the home and recognise individual triggers for each young person. Staff have developed strategies in order to recognise and manage specific triggers effectively and this includes the management of unacceptable behaviour. Each young person has an individual behaviour management plan that details specific targets coupled with strategies for managing behaviour. In addition clear evidence of keyworker sessions addressing specific behaviours complements the team work involved in their care.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff undertake child protection training in order that they are able to respond appropriately to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Risk assessments are in place and assist to capture specific risks for each young person. A monthly review of the risk assessments takes place and young people are encouraged to have direct input in developing this. This process enables young people to see where risk has reduced or escalated and assists in evaluating the methods used to reduce any potential risks. This is an excellent tool that assists young people to both understand and begin to manage personal risk. Similarly, young people benefit from regular sessions with a psychologist, counsellor and keyworker on a variety of issues including bullying. These sessions are supported by group discussions that help to raise young people's awareness of the issues surrounding bullying and how they are to be supported should they experience this.

Young people confirm bullying is not tolerated in the home and feel that staff will take the appropriate action should an incident occur. Staff demonstrate that they are vigilant to any bullying and efficiently promote the home's zero tolerance approach to this matter. This protects young people.

Young people rarely go missing from home, and those who do are encouraged to return safely. Young people benefit from excellent relationships that are developed with local agencies who visit the home frequently. The partnerships help to ensure that young people are offered additional support and guidance in order to maintain their overall safety. The young people said 'they talk to you all the time, read to you and explain things to you. If you go out they will follow you to make sure you are ok and help you come back. I feel safe here and I know the staff want me to be safe'.

Comparatively, young people are encouraged to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour. Young people said 'well, they are ok, better than I have had before, well, I think so, I haven't had any yet'. Methods such as incentives for young people who have acted on their own initiative or complete their weekly plan, are in place and prove successful. Likewise young people benefit from regular sessions with the home's psychologist and this is supported by individual keyworker sessions. This work helps to identify triggers for young people and ways in which their behaviour can be managed effectively. As a result sanctions are minimal. A staff member said 'behaviour is something we deal with individually although there are house rules for everybody, we are able to risk assess certain behaviours and have action plans within the behaviour management plan in order to manage it effectively'. Staff focus on de-escalation techniques and engage with young people in order to assist them work through their anger. As a result physical intervention is minimal within the home. Staff say 'none of the strategies we use are forceful or in anyway hurt the child, we generally guide young people away from a situation or circumstance, but we record it in the restraint book because it is a physical intervention'. Young people are encouraged to discuss any incidents and this is also complemented by a keyworker session. This process enables the young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others and offers very good opportunities to make positive changes.

The physical environment is safe and secure. Staff promote young people's

continued protection by undertaking regular fire drills, service tests and making sure that all faults are efficiently addressed. Clear evidence highlights stringent monitoring of all systems within the home including the appropriate storage, administration and recording of medication.

Staff are vigilant when managing visitors and take appropriate steps to verify visitor's identity to protect young people. The Statement of Purpose and function includes a glossary of staff presently employed within the home and is complemented by a list of their individual experience and qualifications. The recruitment and selection of the people working in the home is very thorough. The manager carefully ensures that staff have the skills and competence to meet the individual needs of the young people. The staff at the home are suitable checked ensuring young people's overall safety within the home is maintained.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home that is efficiently and effectively managed. Embedded monitoring systems ensure that young people, staff and the premises receive high priority care that is sustained and further developed.

The manager and staff clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering exceptional tailored care to the young people. As a result excellent achievements have been made in areas such as education, peer friendships, behaviour management and engagement with staff.

The manager has a clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and areas for development based on strong evidence. The manager makes very good use of reflective practice ensuring excellent communication and consultation with the young people, staff, social workers and family, where applicable.

The home has made sustained improvements over the last three inspections. Regular Regulation 33 and 34 monitoring reports are used to inform practice and all matters are acted upon immediately. This process ensures that minor shortfalls in practice are identified quickly and efficiently and systems are improved to reduce any further shortfall.

Staff are very well supported by the manager. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the high expectations for providing excellent child care practice. They confirm if they require support and guidance, the manager is always available. Staff said 'she is great, very supportive and very thorough. We are a very close staff team many of us have worked here for a long time and this helps keep everything consistent'. The manager said 'the staff have an excellent relationship with the young people and that is why we are able to achieve so well. The staff have different skills and we see them both as parents and grandparents in their style, such as nurturing'. In addition the team meet monthly to review practice and the running of the home, collectively looking at ways to improve the service. Staff have access to a comprehensive training package that highlights the needs of the young people and provides the staff with the skills and knowledge to effectively do their job.

The home's written records are securely stored and provide a comprehensive picture of individual needs, development and progress. Young people's records contain up-to-date information and are accompanied by relevant documents from placing authorities.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.