

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Jennie Christopher
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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 children's home is registered to offer short break placements for children and young people with learning and physical disabilities and sensory impairment. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation and is registered for 14 children.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home has high aspirations for the young people using the service. Individual placement plans devised in conjunction with parents and carers clearly demonstrate how young people's social, emotional and health needs are met. Young people receive excellent care from a stable and committed staff team that enables them to improve confidence and self-esteem in a social environment.

The young people have appropriate relationships with staff and feel they support them and keep them safe. Consistency of staff approach to young people ensures clear messages and appropriate boundaries are maintained. Young people's and parents views are actively sought and considered with regards to the running of and any changes to the provision. Young people communicate positively about the home and the range of activities they are able to take part in.

Further development is recommended in the submission of: the manager's monthly checks to Ofsted, recording of restraint in line with regulations, volunteers being subject to the same vetting as permanent staff, risk assessments regarding locks on internal doors, following the Children's Workforce Development Councils induction package and quality checks on young people's files.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
17B (2001)	ensure the record of any use of measure of control, discipline or restraint contains confirmation that the child concerned and the person using the measure have been spoken to about the use of that measure and of any methods used to avoid the need to use that measure (Regulation 17B (3)(h) and (4)(b))	09/12/2011

34 (2001)	ensure that a report in respect of monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 is forwarded to Ofsted. (Regulation 34 (2))	09/12/2011
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the children's home has a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working (including as volunteers) for the children's home which includes Criminal Record Bureau Disclosures (NMS 16.3 (b))
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when required with regard to young people's files (NMS 22.1)
- ensure new staff undertake the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, commencing within 7 working days of starting their employment and being completed within 6 months (NMS 18.3)
- ensure that where it is necessary to adjust the environment of the home so that it is safe and secure, then decisions about the use of locks should be based on a careful risk assessment that allows children as much freedom as possible, consistent with the need to keep them safe. (NMS 10, Volume 5, statutory guidance, para 2.108)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive highly individualised support, enabling them to improve their confidence, self-esteem and have a better understanding of their abilities. The service strives in providing a social setting for young people to socialise with their peers and young people have strong bonds with others in the group. All young people enjoy a range of activities and opportunities that may not be available to them in the family home, such as soft play, sensory rooms and access to community activities. They are supported to reach their maximum potential through individualised life skills sessions and support in maintaining relationships. Young people's emotional resilience increases through time spent away from their main carer, improving confidence for when they move on to future placements. Staff respect and value young people as individuals and one young person commented 'I really like being here because I can have sleepovers with my friends.'

Parents maintain responsibility for all aspects of physical and emotional health. Young people benefit from continuation of this while at the service, where well-being is enjoyed through individually tailored activities supporting their health needs. Young people have excellent attendance at school in line with their peers. This is

supported by the home providing transport to and from education when young people are using the service.

Young people develop a wide range of practical skills for independent living in line with their abilities, including cooking meals and self-care skills. When appropriate, those who are moving on are supported with tailored short break packages to increase independent living skills.

Young people enjoy involvement in the local community through activities such as the forthcoming Christmas party and carol service. Neighbours enable this through donations both financially and of their time to ensure young people have positive experiences.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy excellent and constructive relationships with staff and are supported to build relationships with their peers.

Staff listen to young people so they can express themselves. This was demonstrated by staff actively supporting a young person to make a decision about what activity to do, how it would fit in with other young people and their evening routine. Young people and their parents are routinely consulted through coffee mornings, suggestion boxes and direct consultation. This has resulted in improving the range of activities on offer and new garden equipment being bought. Individual discussion with young people and parents is used to ensure they understand when their wishes cannot be met and the reasons for this.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for the young people and support their educational placements, through robust communication and joint visits to ensure consistency of care. Those moving on from school have been supported to attend specialist daytime workshops at the service to prepare them for moving onto residential college.

The home has extensive activity equipment on site, including a soft play area, sensory room and a den for the older young people. Young people enjoy activities in the community, ranging from bowling and swimming to cinema and meals out. Indian head massage and aromatherapy sessions by qualified therapists are also available to complement young people's social, emotional and health needs.

Young people and parents are central to the placement planning process and the brief but inclusive plans clearly describe all aspects of care for their stay. Young people know how they will be cared for while using the service including how their cultural needs will be met.

Healthy eating is promoted through posters and activities such as cooking. Those who have specialist diets are catered for appropriately and all staff are aware of their

needs. Young people who are fed by alternative methods, such as tubes, are included in the mealtime process. Young people experience a range of foods from different cultures. Young people's physical health is supported effectively by staff trained in individual aspects to meet their needs while away from their parents. Medication is stored appropriately and there is a robust system for ensuring safety when administering medications. To protect young people in case of emergency there are qualified first aiders on site at all times.

The home is well resourced and located. Living areas reflect the varied interests and tastes of young people.

Young people and parents know how to make complaints of which there are very few. When they do occur they are responded fairly and in a timely manner.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and are kept safe in the home. This is evidenced through the relationships observed between staff and young people. Young people are also relaxed and 'at home' during their stay. There are no incidences of young people missing from care and there is a robust policy that is supported by the local authority and police force available should this happen.

Positive behaviour is promoted and staff are trained in positive behaviour management strategies with an emphasis on de-escalation and diversion. Young people are supported in diverting inappropriate behaviour into more positive experiences, such as soft play or use of the garden. Time out is used in some circumstances and the effectiveness of the intervention clearly recorded. Incidents of restraint are very rare, but are not recorded accurately in line with requirements.

The welfare of young people is fully promoted and they are protected from abuse or harm. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and child protection. They are aware of the home's child protection procedures and have a good understanding of their role in responding to concerns or disclosures. The organisation's recruitment policy for permanent staff ensures that young people are protected from harm by robust personnel checks. However, all volunteers' checks including Criminal Records Bureau disclosures need to be carried out.

Positive steps are taken for ensuring that young people are safe from fire and other hazards. Individual risk assessments carried out in conjunction with parents and carers ensure young people can access age appropriate activities. A risk assessment regarding the use of interior locks is not in place.

Leadership and management

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

The provider meets the aims and objectives that are set out in the Statement of Purpose. Staff implement the ethos and objectives of the home through their enthusiastic work with young people. The development plan outlines clearly what the realistic and achievable plans are. The young people's guide provides clear information in a friendly and appropriate format that has been adapted to individual communication needs.

The home is effectively managed by a committed staff team. Young people benefit from being cared for by a consistent and enthusiastic staff team who receive regular quality training. This is on a yearly cycle for staff to ensure all have the continued skills they require for the changing needs of the young people. However, new staff need to complete a Children's Workforce Development Council induction within the first six months of their appointment. Staff receive quality, challenging and evaluative supervision, which is recorded and monitored.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the service through monthly monitoring of the home and records. The information is used to determine any changes and informs the development plan. However, a system is not in place for the monitoring of young people's files. Also, a summary of checks in relation to Schedule 6 are not being forwarded to Ofsted. The manager actively seeks the views of young people, their families and other stakeholders via coffee mornings and suggestion boxes to consider new ways of improving the provision, including new equipment for the garden. Recommendations from the previous inspection have all been acted upon and any changes implemented. A fire evacuation plan and a clear policy on restraint are now in place improving safety for young people, staff and visitors.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.