

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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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

This service is a privately run children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for one young person who may have a history of placement breakdowns, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The provider has an education unit which is registered as a school with the Department for Education. This provision can be used by young people placed in the home who are unable to integrate into mainstream education, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people have made good progress from the start of their placement to their current position. Young people benefit from staff who have a good understanding of their needs and provide them with continuity and consistency of care. Staff positively promote young people's education and their access to health services, which results in outstanding outcomes for young people.

Communication between the home and other professional agencies is strong and significantly benefits young people. Parents are confident their child is very well looked after in this home. Young people said they feel safe, listened to and that the home is an 'ok' place to live. Staff ensure young people have consistent daily routines such as those usually found within a family home. Young people have many opportunities to learn skills for independence and they particularly enjoy cooking in the home.

Young people participate in a wide range of activities to help improve their physical well-being; this includes cycling and football training. Young people have extremely good support from staff to maintain regular contact visits to their family. Parents said contact arrangements are a real strength of the home and very well organised.

Three shortfalls have been highlighted as a result of this inspection, none of which have a significant impact on outcomes for young people. These relate to the Statement of Purpose, specific information in placement plans and a maintenance issue.

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
4 (2001)	ensure the home's Statement of Purpose is consistent with regulations and contains details as in Schedule 1 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. (Regulation 4 (1))	26/08/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home is well maintained, in particular that young people are provided with a comfortable bed (NMS 10.3)
- ensure placement plans set out any specific strategies that have been agreed to reduce incidences of negative behaviour exhibited by the child. (NMS 3 and Volume 5, statutory guidance paragraph 2.88)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people enjoy good health and have access to a broad range of health services. In conjunction with placing authorities the home maintains strong links to specialist health professionals. This helps to ensure young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are fully considered and appropriate services obtained. Young people talk about their planned and routine health appointments, such as those to the dentist and with the nurse. This level of contact helps young people to achieve sound healthcare routines for life. Professionals working with young people said: 'Staff do an incredible job, the young person was quite withdrawn but the difference now is quite phenomenal.'

Staff significantly encourage young people to lead a healthy lifestyle. Young people learn about different foods and gain skills for independence by being involved in household tasks, food shopping, preparation and cooking of meals. Young people feel very confident with their level of independence skills and consider they are well prepared for leaving care. Staff actively encourage young people to participate in sporting activities to benefit their well-being, for example, walking and cycling. Staff lead by example and are excellent role models to young people. During the inspection a member of staff accompanied a young person on a 24-mile cycle ride. The young person thoroughly enjoyed this activity. News topics are regularly

discussed with young people, which enables them to gain a good understanding of world and local events.

Young people make considerable progress from their starting point at the time of the placement to their current educational position. Young people's school attendance is extremely good. Staff support young people to engage positively with education and have aspirations for their future. A parent said their child has made exceptionally good progress and that, 'they are a different child to what they used to be.'

Young people have staff support to maintain and keep links to their family heritage and culture. A parent said, 'staff are fantastic at facilitating contact.' A social worker said: 'Staff have good liaison with parents and they've worked really hard to sustain this relationship.'

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a very caring environment and have positive relationships with staff. Young people say they get on well with the staff and they are encouraged to give their opinions about their care. Staff actively promote young people's hobbies and interests. This includes activities such as using the computer and attending football training.

Young people are central to decision making in the home. Staff obtain, listen to and act on the views of young people. For example, a young person asked for a bicycle and this was obtained.

Staff are knowledgeable about young people's backgrounds and follow care plans which support them to improve outcomes for the young people. Parents feel staff involve them and keep them up to date about their child's progress. Young people are settled in the home and clearly know the reasons why they are looked after. Staff work very well with educational professionals and maintain strong links with teachers to promote consistency and continuity of education for young people.

Young people said they know how to make a complaint, but have not had to do so. Details about the complaints procedure are covered in the young people's guide. The guide contains a range of information about children's rights and independent organisations for young people to contact as necessary.

Young people live in homely accommodation which is suitably furnished. The house is located in a residential area and there is good access to local facilities and good public transport links. However, young people say their bed is uncomfortable because the mattress is worn. At the time of the inspection the manager made arrangements for a new bed to be delivered to the home and the old bed disposed of.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe in the home. The home has good arrangements to ensure young people are cared for safely. Staff receive training in child protection so that they know how to deal appropriately with safeguarding issues relating to the young people. Professionals and a parent consider young people are well cared for and are kept safe in the home.

Young people know bullying is unacceptable. This is a single occupancy home and the young person says there is no bullying. However, staff promote an anti-bullying environment in their day-to-day work with young people. There are no issues relating to young people missing from the home. In the event of a young person missing from home, staff follow the local police protocol to help ensure their safe return.

Staff have a positive approach to managing young people's behaviours. Young people say they are clear about the consequences for unacceptable behaviour and that staff are fair with them. However, placement plans are not updated to ensure strategies to deal with young people's negative behaviour are fully considered, assessed and implemented by staff.

The staff team are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint and say this is used as a last resort in order to help keep young people safe. This is supported by the home's records which show no restraints since the last inspection. Young people are settled, know the routines and confirm there are no recent physical restraints or sanctions.

Good health and safety procedures help to ensure young people live in a safe physical environment. Young people are aware of the fire evacuation procedures and describe the action to take in the event of a fire. A regular team of staff work at the home with no new staff employed since the last inspection. The manager confirms the provider follows a robust selection and vetting process to establish staff suitability to work with young people.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is effective in her work and supports staff to provide a stable home environment with outstanding outcomes for young people. The home benefits from an experienced and competent staff team who provide continuity of care to young people.

A Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the home and the facilities provided. Professionals involved with young people confirm they are aware of the contents of this document. However, the document does not contain all the relevant information as detailed in regulations. The manager confirms this document

will be updated to better reflect the services provided.

The one recommendation from the previous inspection is met. The manager ensures external agencies working with young people provide services in a timely manner. The work of the agencies helps to inform and support staff in their work with the young people.

Young people are cared for by staff who are well supported by the manager of the home. Staff receive regular formal supervision sessions where they are able to discuss their professional development and the care of young people. Professionals say communication with staff is extremely good and involves regular discussion and written reports about young people's care needs. Additionally, professionals consider staff engage very well with parents.

The home is adequately resourced and employs a sufficient number of staff. Young people said, 'it's alright living here.' Staff show a real commitment to young people's care and demonstrate a positive relationship with them. Young people were seen to be comfortable with staff, they are able to approach them without hesitation and have lots of good humoured banter between them.

The provider ensures independent monthly visits to the home involve young people. Reports from the visit detail areas of good practice and raise issues for improvement in the home. The manager responds to the report and complies with actions raised.

Very positive working relationships with other agencies demonstrate staff work in partnership in the best interest of the young people. Professionals say: 'Staff are consistent in the way they work with the young people', and, 'the staff are competent and the manager is excellent.'

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.