

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Paul Clark
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately owned children's home is part of a large, child care organisation situated in the south east of England which has 15 registered children's homes, three educational teaching facilities and a fostering service. The home provides care and accommodation for up to three young people aged between 11 and 17 years. It is situated on the seafront of a seaside town 50 yards from the beach. There is a shopping parade close by and there is easy access to other local amenities. There are good rail and bus links with towns, schools and colleges.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides young people with an outstanding level of care. Young people feel safe and happy and enjoy positive relationships with staff. Young people have made outstanding progress both educationally and in addressing offending behaviour. The home works well with partnership agencies and the Police in protecting young people and in promoting their welfare. Placing social workers value highly the level of care provided by the home. The staff team are well managed. There are good levels of training and on-going supervision for staff.

Young people are included in the day-to-day running of the home and there are opportunities in place for their views to be heard. Management and staff ensure that diversity is celebrated and valued. Regard is given to a young person's particular needs arising from their heritage, culture or racial background. Staff have a sound understanding of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and in reducing risk and they receive good training in areas of this work. There are no recommendations made or breaches of regulation identified as a result of this inspection.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

All young people placed are making exceptional educational progress in the agency's own educational provision. Young people who had previously not attended school now have full attendance and are achieving educationally. The home ensures that placing authorities are reminded of their responsibility to have personal education plans and pathway plans in place for young people, and these are in place.

Young people's individual needs are well assessed and are recorded in clearly written placement plans which have been formatted by the agency. These take into account all aspects of young people's social and personal requirements. These include assessments of risk taking behaviours and the actions necessary to address them and to support young people in doing so. This support includes a reward system and financial incentive for good behaviour. As a result of this on-going support there have been no incidents of offending behaviours occurring in the past 12 months. Social workers and independent reviewing officers from placing authorities are happy with the progress young people have made during their time at the home and feel that the home's practice is in line with the agreed plans. One social worker commented that: 'This child was failing in their previous home and they are now making good improvements in their behaviour. This has been due to the consistency and the firm boundaries that the home provides.'

Clearly written placement plans identify the support that young people need and have resulted in outstanding improvements in the behaviours of the young people placed.

Young people are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility for their own health and how to make informed decisions about their lifestyle choices. None of the children placed are smokers and they are actively discouraged by staff from smoking. Staff are actively involved in engaging young people in a range of health-related issues and in the development of their emotional and psychological well-being. The organisation have good links to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the organisation employ the services of a Clinical Psychologist who will undertake direct work with young people when necessary.

The home encourages the young people to engage in healthy activities. There are a number of bicycles which the young people enjoy using. Young people swim at least once each week and all are keen footballers. Young people are also members of a local tennis club and army cadets which both help to promote their health and give them positive engagement with the wider community. Actively promoting healthy lifestyles means that young people are more likely to enjoy a good level of health.

Quality of care

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

The home has high expectations that young people will make social and educational improvements in their lives and these high expectations have been achieved. Young people enjoy full attendance at school and are achieving educationally. Transport arrangements for young people are in place to make sure that they get to and from

school and there are excellent communication systems in place between care and teaching staff. Young people benefit from award systems designed to build their self-esteem and to celebrate their achievements. These are in place both to recognise educational achievements and the progress they make in addressing behaviour management issues. Young people are actively encouraged to engage in the wider community by attending local sporting and recreational clubs and by engaging in charitable works. They often do this alongside staff members thus enforcing positive and constructive relationships between young people and staff.

The home demonstrates an outstanding level of concern about the welfare of young people living in the home. Young people's placements are stable and long term and the staff work well with the local community to ensure that any challenges and stigma that might be presented to children living in care are effectively reduced. The home has established an effective partnership with the local Police and good communication avenues are in place. This ensures that both the whereabouts of young people will be hastily sought should they go missing and that children develop a positive view of the Police. Placing authorities comment that they are kept well informed about the progress of young people by the effective communication systems which the home has set in place.

Young people feel that they are able to express their views and participate in the running of the home by their attendance at weekly resident's meetings. They are also involved in periodic questionnaire surveys, weekly meetings with their key workers and their looked after children review meetings. Young people feel that the behaviour management systems that are in place are fair and reward good behaviour as well as the home just applying sanctions when young people err. Effective recordings systems are in place for incidents occurring and the application of sanctions and restraints. These records are appropriately monitored by senior management.

There are effective arrangements in place for the storage and administration of medication. Staff have all received training in the administration of medication. Young people are encouraged to self-administer medication if determined by appropriate risk assessment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are clear systems and policies in place which help to keep the young people safe. Young people said that they feel safe and are safe. Staff receive good training on safeguarding policies and procedures and this training is appropriately updated. Staff have access to clear information about child protection and safeguarding requirements and they demonstrate a sound understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. Clearly written risk assessments are in place for each young person. These identify any particular areas of individual vulnerability. The agency has a close working

relationship with the local children's safeguarding officer and this ensures that its knowledge and understanding of child protection is continually being developed.

There is a clear written policy on how bullying is to be addressed and a system for recording any such incident and the action taken in response. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the time of the last inspection. Children report that they haven't been bullied whilst in the home and that they are confident that bullying would be effectively dealt with by the staff.

Young people's privacy in their bedrooms is respected. They each have a bedroom key, while there are systems in place to allow staff emergency access to bedrooms and bathrooms should the need arise. Staff ensure that they do not enter young people's rooms without knocking. Young people's care records are maintained securely and contents are not discussed inappropriately. A good balance is achieved between respecting young people's wish for privacy, ensuring their safety and encouraging their appropriate behaviour.

Leadership and management

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

The home is well managed both directly and by senior members of the organisation. Young people receive a good level of care and support from a well organised staff team. There are good systems of communication both within the management team and the staff group. Staff, social workers and families are well informed about daily events, routines and the progress of each young person. Placing agencies say that there is an excellent level of information communication provided by the home.

The manager of the home has many years' experience in residential child care. They have professional child care and management qualifications. Staff receive fortnightly one to one supervision and there are fortnightly team meetings. Staff are confident in the management support that they receive. There is a comprehensive staff induction programme and on-going training for staff in the core skills necessary for their role. The organisation has its own staff training section and staff training is also undertaken in collaboration with the partnership agencies that the home is involved with. The staff team is well balanced with staff of both genders. The deployment and numbers of staff on duty at any one time is based upon the needs of the young people. The management team ensures that staffing levels take into account extra responsibilities, for example, when staff are representing young people at their looked after children reviews and attending school meetings additional staff are deployed. Staff receive training in all of the key areas applicable to their work with young people. Young people say that there is always enough staff on duty and that staff are helpful and available to deal with any concerns that they may have during day or night. Staff are supported in obtaining professionally recognised qualifications. All management and staff undertake an annual development programme which identifies their training and development needs. Staff demonstrate a wealth of knowledge about young people's needs. The skills, experience and backgrounds among the staff team are diverse and wide ranging. Models of therapeutic support

are available to young people.

The monitoring of care is undertaken via regular monitoring visits and written reports undertaken by senior management. Written reviews of the quality of care are undertaken at appropriate frequencies. These address organisational aspirations and identify any necessary areas of development. No recommendations or action requirements were made at the last interim inspection and none have been identified at this inspection.

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.