

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Louise Redfern
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Provision subtype	Children's home

Date of last inspection	22/01/2013
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The children's home is owned and operated by a private organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties.

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 **good**.

Young people make excellent progress living at the home. Their behaviour, health, education, social and safeguarding needs are comprehensively supported and have significantly improved. There is a strong educational ethos, all young people are attending and making exceptional progress in education, given their individual starting points.

Relationships between young people and the staff are excellent. Young people feel safe in the home and value the well-planned and individualised care that they receive. This care enables them to develop in emotional maturity and promotes positive behaviours. Young people's needs and views are central to all aspects of how the home operates. Young people enjoy varied opportunities to engage in activities, both in the home and in the local community. As a result, they improve their social skills and increase in confidence.

The manager and staff team develop positive relationships with other agencies, such as the police and placing authorities, which support young people in the home. Effective monitoring in the home and consultation with young people, parents and placing authorities drives forward the quality of care.

There were no requirements or recommendations made as a result of the last inspection of this home. Two minor shortfalls have been identified during this inspection. These relate to measures of control records and enabling young people to contribute to staff appraisals. These shortfalls have not had an impact on the care or safety of young people in this home.

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 that within 24 hours of the use any measure of control or discipline a written record is made in a volume kept for the purposes of which shall include the time and location and the effectiveness and any consequences of the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B (3) (d) (f))	15/11/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure all staff have their performance individually appraised at least annually and this appraisal takes into account any views of children the service is providing for. (NMS 19.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people make exceptional progress, in relation to their individual starting points; in particular in their attendance and achievements in education. Both young people have significantly improved their attendance levels, which now mean that they are access full time education with 100% attendance. In the summer holidays one young person attended a summer college course; such is their commitment to education. An educational professional commented, 'since being at the home X's turnaround has been amazing, in relation to their educational achievement and commitment, it's like looking at a different child.'

Young people receive support from health professionals and staff to understand the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices. Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle and take responsibility for some of their own medical health needs. They benefit from attending all routine health appointments. Support agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health service are readily available to the young people.

Young people enjoy good opportunities to have contact with family, friends and other

people who are important to them. Contact is promoted within the context of an appropriate balance between individual safeguards and risk assessments. Staff continue to make arrangements and support young people practically and emotionally with contact in order to develop and sustain appropriate relationships.

Young people are making progress, in relation to their individual starting points, in developing their independence skills in preparation for adulthood. For example, they choose meals and take responsibility for their own bedrooms. As a result, young people are empowered and encouraged to develop skills for life, whilst living in a nurturing environment appropriate to their age and understanding.

Young people's meetings, enable them to share their views on menu choices, activity plans and the development of the home. They are consulted in the daily running of the home. For example, they have suggested changes to the summer house and games rooms, this means that both young people have space to pursue their individual interests.

Staff are proactive in identifying individual activities for young people and their participation is regular and enhances their development. Young people regularly attend a youth forum and local community festivals. Young people and the whole staff team enjoy group activities, such as paintballing; these experiences strengthen the positive relationships between young people and staff.

Quality of care

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

Young people comment 'I like it here, there is nothing I would change, the best thing is the staff.' Young people benefit from excellent relationships with the staff team and this promotes a sense of trust and security. A caring and nurturing environment with clear rules and boundaries, leads to constructive relationships between staff and young people.

Young people benefit from highly individualised support that helps them to build self-esteem, grow in confidence and address challenging behaviours. Young people are systematically encouraged to contribute to their care planning. They are involved in discussions about their plans, risk assessments and draw up working agreements with staff on a regular basis. This leads to young people developing a sense of personal responsibility for their behaviour. Young people benefit from effective engagement with their individual behaviour management plans and incentives, which also assist the staff in maintaining consistency.

Young people's views are regularly sought through: daily conversations, key work sessions, young people meetings and statutory review meetings. Young people feel listened to and can recognise the occasions when their views and choices have been acted upon. The home has a comprehensive complaints procedure in place, which is child focused. Since the last inspection no complaints have been received. Young people can and do access children's rights officer's, who are able to offer

independent advice and advocate for them.

Partnership arrangements are extremely effective. Social workers describe staff as, 'having a clear understanding of the young people's individual needs and also as their needs as siblings living together'. Regular and thorough multi-agency meetings are held which ensure that all professionals have the same information and can continue to offer high quality and consistent care and risk management.

The home provides a healthy environment where children and young people access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs, both in the home and in the local community. All young people placed at the home have an identified educational placement that they regularly attend. Given the individual starting points of young people, these are individually significant achievements. For example, one young person who was not engaged in any education when they came to the home is now attending school full-time and making excellent progress.

The whole staff team are particularly effective at celebrating the individual achievements of young people. As a result young people's self-esteem and self-worth is consistently being encouraged and raised. This means that young people feel valued and confident to explore their own identities in a safe and supportive environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe living in this home. One young person commented 'I feel very safe living here, the staff keep me safe.'

There have been no episodes of young people going missing from the home, this is a significant achievement for the young people. Their parent commented 'it's a relief now they don't run away from home. I just know they are safe living there. I am over the moon with the placement.' Despite no episodes of missing from home staff ensure rigorous 'missing from home' risk assessments remain in place. Risk assessments identify potential triggers to missing from home episodes and include individualised action plans. As a result, young people benefit from an integrated approach to maintaining their safety and well-being. The home has established effective working partnerships with local community police to further support safeguarding procedures. One police officer commented, 'I have a fantastic working relationship with the manager, the team have attended training facilitated by the police and work with us in a preventative way to support the young people living at the home.'

Young people have reported incidents of bullying, between themselves. The manager ensured these incidents were effectively addressed and young people understand the impact of bullying behaviours on their relationship as siblings. Young people confirm

that there have been no further incidents. As a result, they have a good understanding of bullying behaviours and feel safe in raising any concerns, as they are confident these will be addressed.

Risk assessments enable young people to continue to take reasonable risks wherever possible, ensuring that they have the opportunity to grow and develop. For example, young people have the opportunity to travel to school independently, if they choose to.

Young people benefit from positive and firm boundaries in the home. As a result, there are no incidents of young people being physically restrained. When inappropriate behaviours occur young people are encouraged to share their views on the consequence. However, records currently do not show the time and location where the consequence was imposed. Also the manager does not routinely comment on the effectiveness of the consequences sanctions, in order to evaluate if the consequence remains appropriate. Currently this is not impacting on young people and their outcomes.

Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures and receive regular and effective training to support their knowledge. Allegations and suspicions of harm are quickly and effectively managed through liaison with local safeguarding teams. All staff are selected and checked through the organisation's robust recruitment procedures. The manager and young people take an active role in recruitment, ensuring that the recruitment of staff is safe in meeting young people's specific needs.

Effective health and safety risk management ensures the home is well maintained. The home provides a safe environment for the staff team and the young people. Young people practice fire drills and in doing so, they have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The home has a permanent, full time Registered Manager and a settled staff team. This ensures consistency in the delivery of care and decision making within the home. The staff value the support and direction provided by the manager and consider her to be open and approachable. Although there have been no complaints to learn from, and no requirements or recommendations from the last inspection, the manager has continued to develop and improve the service, in consultation with the staff team and young people.

The Statement of Purpose and young person's guide accurately represent the specific service the home provides for young people. The staff team are experienced and culturally diverse professionals, who are committed to improving the outcomes of young people. One member of staff commented 'I really enjoy my job, I can really see the improvements in the young people, when X first came here he could not

read, the other day he read his daily log to me, it's amazing what he has achieved.'

The home is well resourced to meet the needs of the young people and good staffing levels are in place on each shift. There are yearly appraisals in place, however, they do not yet allow for young people to share their views about the staff team. Staff report that they receive regular supervision and training, which means that they are able to provide care and support for the young people placed at the home.

The manager has a good approach to identifying young people's individual needs. Effective individual placement plans are established to enable young people to make progress and achieve their full potential. The manager can clearly demonstrate the impact and value that living at the home has had on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time. This includes young people returning to and engaging in education.

Records are well maintained in the home and are stored appropriately. Records contribute to an understanding of young people's lives and show the progress made by the young people.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.