

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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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 is a private children's home run by a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

Overall effectiveness

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

What young people say captures how they feel about the home. Young people comment 'I wish I could stay here until I was old.' Young people have excellent relationships with staff who have a thorough understanding of their individual needs. Most young people make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and continue to develop their skills, confidence and independence.

Young people benefit from well planned, individualised care and detailed placement plans ensure that they are cared for consistently in line with their needs. Staff work very well with partner agencies to ensure a robust network of support and protection is in place, to guide young people in making positive changes in their lives. Young people are confident to raise their views and staff advocate for young people to ensure that they gain the advice and support they need. Championing young people's needs, despite barriers is a key strength of the home and is ongoing in particular to securing young people's successful transition to adulthood.

The Registered Manager places a strong emphasis on providing high standards of individualised child care practices and promotes continuous improvement and development. Excellent internal and external monitoring systems ensure that all aspects of the home are closely scrutinised and the appropriate action taken to enhance the home's performance further. Sound systems and practices are in place to safeguard young people missing from home, however, recordings of these incidents are not always detailed to give a thorough account of the event.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that written records kept by the home when young people go missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of young people's return, any reason given for running away and any action taken in light of those reasons. (NMS 5.10)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people receive individualised, child-centred care which helps them grow in confidence. They are supported to understand their background through meaningful contact with their families and individual link working sessions. Staff promote young people's independence very well, consequently they are able to take acceptable risks and responsibility ready for their transition to adulthood. They are involved in the daily running of the home and participate in house meetings to contribute their views for change and improvement. These practices empower young people to have control over their own daily lives.

Staff are proactive in ensuring young people lead a healthy lifestyle. They take part in regular physical activities including attending the local gym, horse riding and socialising with friends. Young people are registered with health practitioners and undertake statutory medicals. Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on its administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and this contributes to the development of young people.

Staff have high expectations for young people and promote their development and achievement into adulthood. Most young people have an excellent record of attendance at college or training and they have made significant progress which is highlighted within college and school reports. Staff forge relationships with professionals and advocate on behalf of young people to ensure their rights are protected. Young people have taken part in work placements and have won awards for their hard work and success. Additionally, young people participate in youth forums and church youth clubs to contribute positively to their community.

Young people have regular contact with their family and friends which ensures that they continue to build relationships with those significant to them. Moreover, contact benefits young people in understanding their background and identity. Staff are knowledgeable about the emotional impact that contact may have on young people and ensure that they are sensitively supported.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy warm, positive relationships with staff which are the foundation for the good standards of care received by young people. Staff are enthusiastic about their work and actively engage with young people to promote their development. Young people feel that they are listened to and that their views contribute to the running of the home. One young person said 'It is good here I like the staff'.

Good care planning and preparation contributes to the success achieved by young people. They are very well cared for and have individual plans to target their needs.

Staff work directly with young people to develop their understanding of their background and vulnerabilities to encourage their ability to keep themselves safe. Young people have confidence in the complaints process and know how to raise their dissatisfaction. Children's rights and advocacy services are very well utilised to ensure young people's views and rights are foremost.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social well-being is promoted. They engage in activities, holidays abroad, visit family and friends regularly and have personal time with staff to discuss individual issues. Young people have access to health care services to meet their needs in all areas of their development. They are involved in the day-to-day running of the home, menu planning, shopping, cleaning, decorating and furnishing the home which promotes independence, ownership and responsibility.

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Staff champion young people's educational needs with college lecturers and social workers to ensure their needs are fully met. Despite challenges most young people attend education provision regularly and make significant progress. Staff emphasise the value of education and training and provide learning experiences for example day trips out and weekends away to complement young people's learning and development. These practices help young people achieve their potential.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends into the residential area. A warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere was observed throughout the inspection. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personalised and reflect their interests and they are able to have pets. They have space and privacy to see their family and friends and to do their college homework. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good arrangements in place to safeguard and protect young people. Staff receive safeguarding training that is refreshed and have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Young people feel safe and staff work with them individually to address any vulnerabilities and risks. Placement plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessment reports all provide a sound mechanism for responding to young people's changing needs for safety and protection.

Supportive and warm relationships between staff and young people provide the basis for managing behaviour. Methods such as rewards and incentives encourage young people's participation and assist them to accept responsibility for their actions. Young people comment 'the rules are fair it's good here'. Staff receive appropriate training in order to safely manage physical intervention and are clear about its use as a last resort only. There have been no incidents of restraint since the last inspection. Young people are encouraged to behave appropriately and there are no incidents of bullying.

Young people missing from home are responded to positively and fully supported by staff. Although processes and protocols are in place to record missing from home incidents they are not always detailed enough to give a thorough account of the event. The Registered Manager is committed to reviewing and analysing these incidents in finding a way forward in reducing these further with young people.

Young people live in a physically safe environment in which health and safety matters are fully considered. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home and record these. Safety and insurance certificates are up to date and regular fire drills take place to ensure young people and staff are aware of an emergency evacuation route in the event of a fire. Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify visitors identity to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from an experienced, stable and fully qualified staff team. A thorough recruitment process, Criminal Records Bureau and reference checks are all undertaken before any appointment of staff is made. Staff are subject to an induction, probationary period of work and appraisals to further ensure their competence in caring for young people.

Leadership and management

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

The home is efficiently managed and effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. A clear vision of child focused practice is prevalent within the home's culture. The Registered Manager works with young people and staff to rigorously monitor young people's welfare which ensures the good standards of care and the safety of young people. The Registered Manager provides leadership and accountability, therefore, staff fully understand the roles and responsibilities delegated to them.

There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of care which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulation. These visits are thorough and where possible include private interviews with young people. The Registered Manager is committed to continual improvement in the service to young people and has detailed plans for development. The Registered Manager has clear and realistic understanding of the strengths of the service and areas for further progression based on excellent auditing and monitoring practices. There were no recommendations from the previous inspection.

Young people are looked after by a competent staff team who have a wide range of skills and experience to meet their needs. All staff have attained the necessary qualification and have access to a comprehensive training programme. The numbers of staff on duty are sufficient to meet the needs of young people which include support for activities, contact visits and attending appointments. Staff have regular supervision and team meetings which all contribute to the quality of care received by young people.

The home's written records are securely stored and provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Records contain up-to-date information about them including relevant documents from placing authorities. Information is shared confidentially to protect young people's safety and privacy. The diversity of the staff team ensures a range of skills and qualities in meeting the individual needs of young people. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and have high expectations for young people.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.