

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Wilson
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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 children's home provides care and accommodation for up to nine young people, of either sex, aged eight years to 18 years, who present with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private organisation.

Nine young people are currently accommodated in the home and three young people were present and were spoken to.

Overall effectiveness

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

Leaders within the home have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. This leads to good outcomes for young people due to the careful care planning and staff's commitment to young people achieving their aspirations.

Staff are very good at caring for a large group of young people who display a range of complex needs. Staff are particularly good at ensuring that young people's welfare is promoted. This relates to young people's educational needs. Staff demonstrate an excellent commitment to helping young people to achieve the highest possible educational standards that they possibly can. This is achieved by ensuring that they meet the individual needs of each young person and may include supporting them on a one-to-one basis throughout the course of the day. Staff are also very good at the management of young people's behaviour, and ensure that consistent boundaries are set to ensure that matters, such as bullying, are kept to a minimum.

There are shortfalls in a few areas; however, these do not have a negative impact on outcomes for young people. For instance, the preparation of young people to be prepared to live independently is not robust. However, the home is aware of the reasons for this and is taking steps to redress them. Young people's diverse needs are generally well met, but understanding of young people's individual cultures is not as well developed.. Good arrangements for the management of the home are in place, however, a formal application to appoint a registered manager has not been made to Ofsted.

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
7 (2001)	ensure that the registered provider appoints a manager if there is no registered manager in respect of the children's home (Regulation 7 (1) (a))	31/03/2012
11 (2001)	ensure that the home is conducted so as to make proper provision with regards to the cultural needs of young people (Regulation 11 (1) (b))	31/03/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that young people are supported to develop practical skills, including shopping and buying food (National Minimum Standard 12.1 e)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Staff have a good understanding of the importance of the requirement for young people to learn skills that will successfully prepare them to live independently. However, there is a culture within the home, where young people have an expectation that staff will interject in any gaps that they have in their skills. Young people are aware of the need to learn good independence skills that will successfully prepare them for adulthood. Young people have a general understanding of the challenges that may face them and have confidence in their abilities to meet these. Young people have not had their abilities sufficiently tested, as they have an expectation that staff have a responsibility to care for them. Therefore if they do not cook for themselves, they expect staff to ensure they do not go hungry. While this may be true, it does not help to prepare them to take on greater responsibility and learn the personal independence skills to successfully prepare them for adult life. . Plans are in place for this matter to be addressed. This does not currently benefit young people who are due to leave the home imminently.

Young people live healthy lifestyles. They enjoy wholesome healthy foods, which are nutritionally well balanced. Young people enjoy freshly prepared, home cooked meals that are wholesome and nutritious and produced to a good standard by staff. Young people participate in a range of activities that they enjoy and which promote a healthy lifestyle. These take place both in the home and out in the local community.

Good attention is paid to the diverse needs of young people. Their religious needs are generally well met. Young people interact with others from backgrounds similar to their own. Young people have contact with people or external organisations that

are reflective of their individual diverse needs, where this can not be immediately met by staff. Young people's racial needs are met, but not always in respect of their individual cultures.

Young people have an appreciation of the impact that having a good education can have on their life outcomes. Consequently, they ensure that they attend regularly and make use of the additional facilities that are available in the home. This includes internet access and support from staff.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with each other. Care has been taken to ensure that young people are placed with others of similar needs so that they can develop good relationships with each other. Staff are good at ensuring that young people have a positive self view. They have high aspirations for young people in their care. This is central to and integrated in every aspect of young people's care, support and daily life. Young people are supported to take pride in their identity and heritage. Staff ensure that young people understand their heritage. They respond to these appropriately, however, some issues relating to young people's cultures are not met to young people's individual requirements.

Staff have high educational aspirations for young people in their care. They offer excellent support to ensure that young people have a high level of attendance and are punctual. All young people have an educational placement. Staff, where appropriate, support young people on a one-to-one basis during the school day. This helps young people achieve objectives set out in their behaviour plans as well as ensuring that they have a good understanding of the subjects that they are taught. Staff use the knowledge that they have learned about the national curriculum to support other young people with their home work to ensure that they can achieve the highest educational standard that they possibly can. Staff ensure that routines are arranged so that young people have access to the home's educational resources. This is to ensure that there is no barrier to them having all the necessary support that is required for the completion of their homework. This includes access to a computer.

Positive behavioural strategies are in place to support young people to develop skills in managing conflict and to develop positive relationships with others. Sanctions given are fair and are appropriate to the rule that has been broken. Routines are in place and good relationships between young people and staff are evident. This enables staff to provide consistent messages and boundaries so that young people know what behaviour is expected of them. Consequently, significant incidents are kept to a minimum.

Young people benefit from regular contact with friends, which helps them to sustain, reinforce and create links with their birth family and wider support networks. Contact arrangements are clear, known to staff and are undertaken in accordance with plans

set out by placing authorities.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the effective management of bullying. Staff are aware of the trigger factors with regards to this. This includes the potential for some people to be bullied or to display bullying behaviours. Environmental factors, such as school holidays are also taken into account. Effective strategies are in place to ensure the safety of all young people. This includes young people being in smaller, more manageable groups. Staff also see the benefits of young people's involvement in activities, particularly physical activities as a way of positively channelling their energies. As a consequence, incidents of bullying are kept to a minimal. If they do occur, they are dealt with in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Good steps are taken to ensure that young people feel safe and secure and that they are protected from harm. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding matters and how these translate into practice. Staff receive regular safeguarding training to ensure that they are kept up to date with any changes in guidance and legislation with regards to safeguarding practice. This ensures that young people's welfare is promoted and safeguarded.

Staffing levels are high which ensures that young people are effectively monitored and incidences of them going missing or unauthorised absent are rare. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the reporting and recording systems with regards to this. Staff have good relationships with the local police and they work in partnership to ensure that they are aware of any issues in the community that may impact on the welfare of young people. The police support staff to ensure that young people return home safely in the event that they are reported missing.

The home provides a high level of physical safety for young people and ensure that the premises are robustly and regularly checked in order to eliminate hazards. Health and safety inspections by external agencies are also undertaken within required timescales to ensure that all equipment is in good working order.

Clear behaviour management strategies are in place which help to reduce any incidences of negative behaviour exhibited by a young person. Staff are skilled at diffusing difficult situations to avoid them escalating. Restraints are only undertaken to prevent likely injury to the young person or others. Appropriate recording and information sharing systems are in place. This ensures that restraints are reviewed to ensure that they are conducted safely and in accordance with policies and procedures.

The home is located, designed and maintained to a good standard. Young people's rooms are well furnished and their rooms are personalised and meet their individual tastes.

Leadership and management

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

There is no Registered Manager at the home: however, this has not had a negative impact on the care of young people. The acting manager has worked for the organisation for a long period of time and therefore provides continuity of care for young people. The home has a good management and staff team who are enthusiastic and committed to meeting the individual needs of young people. The manager is supported by deputy managers who deputise in his absence. The home regularly looks at ways to improve the overall experience of young people and to ensure that their outcomes are robustly monitored. The management and senior support team work together well to ensure that the staff team are well supervised and trained in promoting the welfare of young people. The responses that staff give are updated regularly to meet the changing needs of young people.

Regular monitoring of the home is undertaken to ensure that the home is operating in accordance with its Statement of Purpose. This includes regulation 33 visits by an independent person as well as regulation 34 monitoring by the manager. This monitoring is effective in ensuring that the home continues to provide good outcomes for young people.

Staff receive substantial support by management. As a consequence they have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they have high expectations of what children can achieve. Staff confirm that managers are highly committed and readily available should they have any queries or concerns about any aspect of meeting the individual needs of children or in respect of the way that the home is run.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.