

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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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

The home provides residential care for up to eight children and young people usually offering short breaks, but sometimes they can stay there for a few weeks. Children and young people who use the home have either a physical disability or a learning disability. The local authority owns and operates this setting.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a well organised, efficient and supportive environment. Members of staff provide consistent care and both encourage and support young people to develop their personal skills and abilities. Young people receive care from an experienced and lively staff team. The manager and members of staff consistently challenge themselves to deliver higher standards. There is a committed approach to enabling young people to develop socially, physically and emotionally. Members of staff actively support the education of young people and have developed strong links with local education providers. Young people living at the home are kept safe, well and free from harm. Thorough written records are maintained, which are both accurate and detailed.

The manager and members of staff are always looking for ways to improve and enhance the service they provide. The diverse needs of the young people using the service create new challenges for staff members who remain adaptable, dedicated and motivated. The home also employs a regular team of staff from an independent agency to work with one specific young person. The staff from the agency do not have their working practices directly supervised by the home's manager. This means the supervision of all staff within the home is inconsistent, and the care delivered to young people is not adequately monitored.

Each young person has an individualised behaviour management plan, care plan and risk assessment in place. Members of staff take time to explain the content of plans and risk assessments to young people. However, some documents are not written in a manner to aid their understanding and are not regularly reviewed. Some young people will not therefore, fully understand what it is that the home is trying to achieve for them, and how they can work toward meeting their own needs. The home has a Statement of Purpose in place which explains what the home wants to achieve and what services it provides. The Statement of Purpose does not record the details of the current regulatory authority. In addition, the independent visitor to the home does not always elicit the opinions of family members about the care the young people receive. The care young people receive is not, therefore, robustly monitored by someone independent of the home and family members are unable to

contact the regulatory authority directly, if they have any concerns.

The home has a young people's guide which is clear, easy to understand and provides detailed information about what it is like to live at the home. The home's manager has developed a recorded version of the young people's guide. This is available to all young people, but specifically those who have communication difficulties. This ensures that all young people know what the home provides and what it will be like to live there.

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
33 (2001)	interview, with their consent and in private, such of the children accommodated there, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as appears necessary in order to form an opinion of the standard of care provided in the home. (Regulation 33 (4)(a))	27/01/2012
27 (2001)	ensure that all persons working at the home receive appropriate training, supervision and appraisal. (Regulation 27 (4)(a))	27/01/2012

Recommendations

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

- ensure that each young person who is eligible, has a detailed and comprehensive transition plan in place (NMS 12.4)
- encourage young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and keep all risk assessments associated with that behaviour up to date (NMS 3.6)
- ensure that each young person's behaviour management plan is regularly reviewed and kept up to date (NMS 2.93; Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes)
- ensure that all placements made at the home are underpinned by an up to date assessment of the young person's needs and family circumstances (NMS 3.2; Children's Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes)
- review the home's Statement of Purpose to ensure it includes the up to date contact details of the current regulatory authority (NMS 13.3)

- review each young person's care plan on a regular basis and record all individual progress being made. (NMS 25.8)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have a key worker and this key worker system used in the home is well organised and effective and helps young people to achieve their agreed goals. Members of staff are fully aware of each young person's strengths and they provide a supportive and enthusiastic environment in which young people can develop their independence and learn new skills. The local authority participation officer said, 'the home's fantastic, it really is. The young people here are fully involved in moving things forward and are on the authorities', young people's council.' Activities which young people have enjoyed include walks, visits to local parks, the sea life centre and theme parks. Young people living at the home receive individualised help and support. This helps them to become involved in the local community, to learn new things, to grow in confidence and to develop their self-esteem.

There is an excellent approach to promoting the health and well-being of young people. The health of young people remains the primary responsibility of their parents; however, staff members have developed positive relationships with responsible medical practitioners. Members of staff display a committed approach to caring for young people and the rapport developed with parents and medical practitioners fully supports and enhances this. Young people have clear health plans in place and their individual needs are clearly identified. Young people enjoy a wide variety of different foods, which includes food from other nationalities and cultures. One young person commented that the food was nice. Specific and specialised diets are fully catered for within the home. Young people are encouraged to take exercise and are supported to use the play equipment in the garden. This helps them to stay healthy, fit and well.

Young people receive a consistent level of help and support to learn new skills and to develop their independence. Within the limits of their abilities, young people are able to bake and prepare snacks. In addition, young people are also enabled to participate in budgeting and shopping. A grandparent stated 'my grandson is encouraged to do as much as he can. I was really nervous at first about him coming here but now I'm really pleased he did.' Young people are also supported to attend to their own personal care tasks. Members of staff adopt a sensitive, discreet approach to this and support young people to be as independent as possible and to attend to their own needs. This helps to prepare them fully for adult life.

The education of young people living at the home remains the primary responsibility of their parents. However, members of staff provide consistent support to young people in their attendance. One young person stated, 'staff always make sure I go to school.' Young people are able to continue learning whilst living at the home and to experience a wide range of activities. Young people's files contain all the necessary

educational information, including statements of special educational needs and personal education plans. This helps to promote each young person's continued education and improvement.

Quality of care

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

The home provides an extremely warm, nurturing and supportive environment in which young people can thrive and develop both physically and emotionally. Care planning systems used within the home are well organised and thorough. Written records are maintained and any changes in young people's needs are quickly identified and acted upon. Consistent monitoring in this manner enables staff to evaluate the care they provide and to fully participate and contribute to any reviews. This helps to ensure the changing needs of young people are highlighted and services adapted to meet those needs.

Some young people are nearing the age when they will have to leave the home. Plans for their transition into adulthood and adult services were not available within the home. This means young people, and their parents, will not be fully prepared for this major change in their lives. Young people will not know, early in the transition process, what services are available and how they access them.

Young people's files are detailed and well ordered. Written records provide an extensive and precise record of each young person's stay at the home as well as the interventions carried out by staff members. Young people are fully involved in the running of the home. Regular meetings take place between staff members and young people. Young people also participate in formal consultation events about the care they receive and what improvements they would like to see at the home. Within the home there is a culture of promoting young people's rights and ensuring they are able to participate in all activities on an equal basis. This helps young people to develop and to feel part of the community.

The home has a thorough, detailed and individualised admissions process. Young people are able to visit the home and learn what it is like to live there prior to admission. However, not all young people had a comprehensive assessment of their needs carried out by their social worker prior to being introduced to the home. Staff at the home will be unaware of the young person's precise needs and how they are to be met. Members of staff are committed to ensuring each young person enjoys a positive experience whilst living at the home and are able to participate fully in all activities. Examples of such activities enjoyed by young people include trips to the sea life centre, theme parks and local outings. This helps young people to experience a full range of community activities and to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Young people enjoy living in a quiet residential area. The home has extensive gardens with play equipment which young people can enjoy. Members of staff offer practical support to young people to help them use this equipment. Each young

person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to bring personal possessions with them to make their stay more comfortable. Young people have access to several computers and gaming equipment. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. One young person was observed to be enjoying their time in the garden. The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can socialise and enjoy a meal together. Young people enjoy living in a very comfortable and pleasant environment.

Individual dietary needs are fully catered for. A record is maintained of what each young person has eaten whilst at the home to help ensure they eat a well balanced diet. Each young person has written consent forms so members of staff can administer medication or first aid where this is necessary. The welfare of young people is therefore safeguarded.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good systems in place to safeguard young people and all members of staff have received appropriate training. All training is kept up to date. No child protection concerns have been raised at the home. Members of staff spoken to were able to demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. There have been no occasions when a young person has been missing. In addition, there are no recorded incidents of bullying having occurred. When asked if they were happy at the home, one young person said, 'happy, yes.' The manager and all members of staff are trained in safeguarding and receive regular refresher training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Young people therefore are kept safe and free from harm.

Members of staff actively promote a culture of positive behaviour within the home. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their actions and sanctions and restraint are seldom, if ever, used. Each young person has a behaviour management plan in place. Behaviour management plans are not written in a style that young people can easily understand or contribute to. In addition, behaviour plans are not regularly reviewed and up dated. This means that young people are not enabled to fully understand the consequences of their behaviour. Members of staff use their skills and competencies to encourage young people to develop their positive social skills through reward systems and by listening to them.

The home has a thorough and systematic approach to risk management. Risk assessments are available with regard to the building and gardens and in relation to each young person. Risk assessments are clear, focused and regularly reviewed. Risks to young people are therefore minimised and they live in a safe environment.

The manager carries out regular checks of the fire systems, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Young people take part in fire drills and the time at which fire drills take place are fully recorded. Regular checks of gas installations and electrical equipment also take place. Full written records are maintained by the home's

manager. Members of staff demonstrate a sound understanding of health and safety and fully implement the home's risk assessments. This helps to keep young people safe.

Young people benefit from an extremely stable staff team. There have been no new appointments since the last inspection. A small group of staff have been appointed from an independent agency to work with one young person. The membership of this group is consistent, which mean the young person is familiar with those providing the care. Visitors to the home are asked to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitor's book. Checks undertaken ensure that young people are kept safe from abuse and potential abusers.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose, although it does not contain the contact details of the current regulatory authority. This means that, the parents of young people will not be able to contact the regulatory authority if they have any concerns about the home. Members of staff provide an extremely warm, structured environment in which young people can flourish and develop both physically and emotionally. Care practices enable young people to develop their activities for daily living and independence skills. The young people's guide to the home includes contact details of the Children's Rights Director and their independent reviewing officer. In addition, the guide has been produced in a, 'talking book' format. This helps young people with communication difficulties to understand what the home provides.

Members of staff fully understand each young person's individual strengths and needs. Working practices are both coherent and consistent in enabling young people to develop and to achieve their maximum potential. Young people are supported to learn new skills and to participate fully in how the home is run. This helps them to develop their confidence and to improve their self-esteem.

Young people receive care from a well-supported staff team and all members of staff are fully committed to challenging anti-discriminatory practice. One staff member said, 'It's great here, I really love it. I can talk to the manager or anyone else if I have a problem or concern. I never feel on my own.' The home also employs a small staff team from an independent care agency to support a particular young person's needs. The staff from the agency are not direct employees of the organisation and the home's manager does not provide them with formal supervision. The staff from the agency do not have their working practices directly supervised by the home's manager. This means the supervision of all staff within the home is inconsistent, and the care delivered to young people is not adequately monitored. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to training all staff and in ensuring their training is kept up to date and is relevant to the needs of the young people they look after. This is a home where staff members actively share ideas and good practice.

The manager provides effective management and has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Problem areas are quickly highlighted and swift action is taken. The home is visited by someone independent in accordance with regulations. Written reports of these visits focus on the home's strengths and also identify any areas for improvement. The independent visitor discusses the running of the home with both members of staff and young people. However, no regular discussions take place with the parent's or relatives of young people. The views of parents or relatives are not routinely considered.

The home's manager is an experienced and well respected professional who provides effective and competent leadership. Staff meetings are held at frequent intervals.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.