

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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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 respite care for up to five young people with learning or physical disabilities. The home is operated by a local authority and is fully equipped to deal with the needs of the young people.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a supportive environment with consistent boundaries. Young people's complex needs are supported fully and understood by staff. They are enabled to make choices and contribute to making decisions. Outstanding support from staff helps them to develop confidence to enjoy new experiences. Young people have excellent attendance at school and the home works with the school to set progress and development goals. They are safe at the home and staff are well trained and supervised in order to offer the young people a secure environment to live in. Young people enjoy staying at the home and are able to contribute to its decoration and planning of the outside areas. The home is well managed with comprehensive systems in place to ensure the young people continue to be happy, enjoying respite care there.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people who are profoundly disabled are supported to work towards reaching their full potential whether this is through small developmental steps or working towards more of a sense of independence. Staff support this by setting daily progress objectives such as dressing and eating and following them through with the young people. This helps them to develop, grow and understand their own abilities. One young person said, 'the thing that I find good is the helpers doing things with us which is very, very, very nice'. Young people are enabled to know themselves because staff are diligent and consistent in making sure young people make choices about their lives. One parent said, 'staff build good relationships with the children, always treat them with dignity and respect, thinking up new ideas to assist them'.

Young people are given individual support, which, combined with a 'can do' attitude by the staff team, enables the young people to participate in a variety of interesting activities. Staff promote and value young people's right to enjoy a community

presence. They enjoy a wide range of activities that include swimming, bowling, shopping, climbing, ice skating and trips to theme parks, theatres and wild life parks. Young people enjoy being out and about in the local community and attend trips to local festivals and events. All of the trips are clear and robustly risk assessed to ensure the safety of the young people. Each young person's preferences for activities in the home are also known and encouraged, for example, listening to music, playing on the computer, using the sensory room and using the new relaxation room. One parent said, 'my child is very well looked after at the home and I feel very confident about having them there. They are always encouraged to do all sorts of activities like 'wheelchair ice skating' and they are always out and about in the community'.

Young people's complex health needs are comprehensively met whilst staying at the home. Staff understand the complexity and importance of managing health care needs and medication. Clear information is available and appointments with health professionals are arranged and specialist input ensures that the young people's emotional and physical health is promoted. Young people are supported in their physical and personal hygiene needs. Clear and detailed individual protocols are in place for the staff to follow when carrying out personal support and intimate care, as well as for epilepsy care. Young people's medication, medical and emergency care is well managed by the staff and parents give appropriate written consent. The health of the young people, both physically and emotionally, is valued and promoted to an excellent standard.

Young person's dietary and cultural needs and preferences are acted upon and they are offered a varied and healthy diet. Young people are also offered the opportunity to prepare food and are given excellent levels of encouragement and support from the staff in order to do this.

Young people's attendance at local schools or colleges is outstanding. Key workers ensure close liaison with the young people's educational settings and will visit them on a regular basis. Young people have targets that are shared between the school or college and the home. For example, teaching young people to recognise money and then to use it in a shop.

Young people are pro-actively supported and prepared for transition to adult establishments as they become older. Young people visit the next placement with staff and their parents and carers. Placements are identified as soon as possible and staff liaise with them to ensure that the necessary information is shared. This approach assists in ensuring that a continuity of care can be maintained. Young people generally live at home with parents and carers but do have contact with them whilst staying at the home.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy staying in an excellent, caring, supportive environment. They have comprehensive placement plans that contain lots of photographs illustrating achievements in different situations. Plans also identify all health, physical, social,

educational, cultural and leisure needs and how to meet these. Each young person has daily objectives set around making progress. These are identified and worked on daily. Key workers review the progress of each young person and identify changes to meet individual needs. Young people contribute to their reviews reports by making a DVD which is shown to people at the meeting. Young people at the service have profound disabilities but are enabled to contribute to decisions made about their lives. One parent said, 'the staff listen to us and have always gone out of their way to accommodate us'.

Staff consult young people on a daily basis and empower them, as far as it is possible, to consider their circumstances, behaviours, relationships and interactions. Young people are provided with many levels and styles of communication, such as photographs, Pecs, Makaton and verbal indicators. This helps them to make decisions about what they want and need. Staff create an inclusive environment that encourages effective communication for each young person to help them make choices and express their views. Young people were seen to be enabled to communicate and were listened to by the staff.

Young people are given guidance in an appropriate manner which is designed for each individual, based on their level of understanding, age group and communication abilities. Staff discuss and think through each plan to deliver information about health and social issues including, sex and relationships, education, protecting oneself and bullying.

Young people are supported by staff to attend either local schools or colleges. Young people are helped to be ready for the school day with the care and understanding of staff who know the routines and complex needs of each individual.

The staff are pro-active in helping young people to participate in a variety of interesting activities. Staff interaction with the young people is sensitive and supportive, allowing them to make choices whilst ensuring that their safety and wellbeing is protected and promoted. The young people are seen to be relaxed in the company of the staff who care for them.

Young people's individual, cultural and religious needs are met by staff. There is good partnership working with parents to ensure that young people are happy and living their lives to their full potential. This is supported by the outstanding provision and facilities and the excellent activities, both in the community and at the home. Support for young people's individual needs, including ethnicity, are woven through everyday life.

Young people benefit greatly from the home's location and design. Externally and internally, the home is maintained to an excellent standard. Young people have a range of communal areas for play and exercise, outside and indoors. There are fantastic facilities which encourage and stimulate positive activities. Young people work an allotment with the staff and the produce is used in the kitchen. The house has a new extension which has a sensory room and relaxation centre with state of the art equipment to provide an excellent sensory experience. A safe, clean and

healthy environment is maintained for young people. Each young person has their own bedroom which can be individualised whilst they are staying at the home. Young people are kept safe whilst staying in the home as all the specialised equipment such as the hoists are safely maintained on a regular basis.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are protected in the home by staff who understand and support them. Young people have different ways and levels of communication; staff caring for the young people understand the different in which they show distress. All members of staff receive child protection training and are up-to-date with local safeguarding procedures child protection procedures. The home's approach ensures that any child protection matters are rigorously addressed and there is close liaison with all agencies.

Young people do not have a formal complaints' procedure. Instead, the staff have an intimate knowledge of how each young person communicates and how they show displeasure. Formal complaints, normally made by parents or carers, are recorded and a clear record shows how they are processed according to timescales. The home also keeps a record of compliments received from parents and professionals.

Young people's behaviour can impinge on members of the group. Staff give intense support to address and resolve issues promptly. Young people may not understand the concept of bullying, but the staff communicate clearly and creatively to them that behaviour which can cause distress to another is not okay.

Young people at the home are treated in a individual manner and staff respond individually to the specific behaviour of each person. All members of staff are trained physical intervention. Incidents where physical intervention is used are rare and are properly recorded. Young people have detailed individual support plans which have been developed in co-ordination with parents and relevant professionals such as social workers and teachers. These outline the behavioural support and reassurance each young person needs. The plans address each young person's particular issues and the strategies to manage distress or anxieties. One young person said, 'it's good that the helpers stop the children from doing unsafe things'. Young people at the home do at times receive sanctions, but again this is carefully done with respect for children's level of understanding and perception about any event.

All members of staff are subject to a rigorous recruitment process which ensures that all necessary checks have been carried out before they work in the home. Excellent, robust risk assessments are in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure that the environment and activities are safe. Young people are also comprehensively risk assessed with regards to behaviour. Fire equipment is regularly checked and all the young people take part in fire drills. Young people have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). This is an individual plan which addresses their physical and

learning disabilities and their needs for assistance when they have to be evacuated in an emergency. Equipment such as the hoists and bathing equipment is regularly checked and assessed to ensure the safety of the young people.

Leadership and management

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

Young people receive an outstanding service from the staff. There is a strong sense of common purpose at the home through well known goals and aspirations; everyone at the home takes responsibility for putting these into practice. The home is well managed and monitored by an experienced manager with a wealth of knowledge about the children and the respite service. One parent said, 'the staff at the home are exceptional and very special people'.

The Statement of Purpose is up-to-date and accurately reflects what the home intends to achieve. Young people receive a children's handbook, which explains using pictures and symbols, what it is like to live in the home.

Monthly visits undertaken by an independent person take place and robust reports of this make recommendations about the practice in the home. Staff consider best care practice and children's individual needs at staff meetings. This approach ensures that the conduct of the home and effectiveness of the care is constantly assessed. At the last inspection the home received no requirements or recommendations.

Young people are closely supported and supervised and for some young people this means one-to-one staffing. The staffing structure includes senior care workers and this ensures there is experience and knowledge available to members of staff on shift when the manager is not around. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisals and informal support is also readily available.

Young people benefit from a staff team who receive ongoing training and this expands their knowledge and skills in delivering complex safe care. Staff are clear as to what they are trying to achieve and what targets and goals are in place in order to encourage progress within the young people. The effect of this approach is to enable young people to grow in confidence and reach their full potential.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.