

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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 home is operated by a local authority. The home is registered as a children's home for up to six young people at any one time. The service offers short break care only for children and young people with severe learning and/or physical disabilities of either gender, between the ages of five and 18 years. The service is operative for 43 weekends a year and for five weeks scattered through the school holidays.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people receive excellent quality of care. They make exceptional progress from their starting points because the care provided is focused on young people achieving positive outcomes. Staff effectively enable young people to maximise their full potential and encourage communication specific to their individual needs to make their wishes and feelings known.

The home provides a safe and nurturing environment where young people feel safe and protected. This is because staff are pro-active in making safeguarding a priority. Young people have excellent relationships with the staff who in return deliver effective well-planned and personalised care.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting points. They gain self-confidence in their abilities from staff that respect their individuality. Young people's potential is maximised regardless of the difficulties they face. A parent commented about being very pleased with progress. Young people remain healthy and benefit from a well-planned individualised menu that reflects cultural and dietary needs. This means young people maintain healthy life styles. Young people with health needs that require invasive support are included and encouraged to participate during meal times to ensure they remain part of the social experience. This means young people are valued.

Young people benefit from good support because the staff are skilled and knowledgeable at providing complex care. Young people benefit from sensory experiences during activities that enhance their capacity to achieve success in every day life. For example, young people experience taste, smell and touch while baking. This means important skills develop that encourage confidence and enhance emotional resilience.

Young people profit from positive relationships because strong bonds made enhance the social experience and improve communication. Staff meet young people's needs during their short break stay because they are sensitive and match their needs appropriately with those similar to other young people. A parent said, 'my child has the chance to mix with other children and play with her friends.' This demonstrates the quality and importance of contact young people experience that enhances their social and emotional skills.

The home works in partnership with education to improve the outcomes for young people. For example, young people benefit from accessing the service straight from school instead of going home first. This means young people are more comfortable, relaxed and confident.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive excellent quality care because staff are dedicated, well trained and skilled. Parents comment about the home being welcoming and friendly and say staff fully support young people with all their cultural and religious needs regardless of their disability. Staff deliver care that is fair and non-discriminative and ensures equality and diversity is embraced.

Strong well-established relationships exist between staff, young people and other professionals. As a result, young people feel valued and respected. The health needs of young people are managed with precision and intricacy because staff are concerned for their welfare. Where young people require additional support in regards to personal care, staff's delivery is sensitive and dignified. Staff work hard with parents to ensure dietary requirements of young people are reflected in the menu planning. This ensures consistency for young people in maintaining healthy lifestyles tailored to their individual needs.

Young people use a range of individual communication systems to contribute to the care they receive. Staff work successfully alongside parents to promote the consistent use of the communication aids to maximise the views, wishes and feelings of young people. For example, staff communicated with a young person by using a Picture Exchange Card to offer a choice of activity. As a result, young people's independence remains paramount.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people in the home and young people are central in the planning and review of their care. Staff provide quality input into the reviews and care planning to capture the value and importance of the service to individuals. This means the quality of the service remains constantly under review.

The home reflects a loved and cared for environment where young people thrive. Young people benefit from bedrooms that are highly personalised with furniture, décor and adaptations that considerably enhance the quality of care received.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are successfully protected from harm because staff make their safety a priority. Young people are safe and feel safe. Staff support young people's safety because they recognise the physical and emotional disabilities that have potential to make them vulnerable.

Young people are protected from bullying in the home and subsequently this is not an issue. Staff provide exceptional support and positively promote good behaviour with praise and reward. As a result physical intervention is not required. The home provides a comprehensive system for young people to raise complaints or concerns and young people are further supported by advocacy services, thus empowering the rights of young people.

The staff vet all visitors, before they enter the home, to protect young people. Although there are clear procedures in place should young people go missing, episodes of going missing have not occurred. The home actively promotes harmony and good behaviour and young people are enthusiastic about returning at each visit. Young people enjoy their short break because they are encouraged to take reasonable risk as part of their growth and development. The risk assessments provide the necessary support required to ensure safe inclusion and participation during activities such as bathing, medication administration and outdoor pursuits. The manager ensures that investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm receive quick and efficient handling. Consequently, this safeguards young people.

The manager regularly monitors the health and safety of the home. Staff and young people undertake regular fire drills to ensure they are familiar with the evacuation procedure. This means they know how to act in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

The management of the home is effective and efficient because the manager consistently communicates high expectations to staff and places young people at the heart. Young people benefit from well-trained staff that deliver consistent continuity of care because of their skill and knowledge. The manager pro-actively monitors the service and evaluates the efficiency along with an independent visitor. Senior staff take an active role in supporting the manager in the additional monitoring of young people's records. As a result, young people profit from additional safeguards and opportunity to raise issues. There was one recommendation raised during the previous inspection in relation to the fire risk assessment. The risk assessment is reviewed by the manager and is up-to-date. This maintains the safety of young people, staff and visitors to the home.

There is excellent leadership that promotes high achievement and expectations from staff. This cascades down to and reflects in the successful outcomes and quality care of young people. The manager continues to improve the service and young people benefit for the clear development plans that outline the strengths and weaknesses. Staff receive quality support through supervision and appraisal to enhance their personal development. This continually improves the lives of young people.

The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. Staff and the local authority are all clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. This indicates that the home is effectively meeting the diverse needs of young people. Young people are consulted wherever possible and staff ensure their views and wishes are represented in the running of the home. This means despite their difficulties, outcomes for young people improve. Staff have a thorough knowledge of each young person, including their ethnic, cultural, social, religious and economic backgrounds. The home has a dedicated staff group who are passionate and who use their experiences, background and skills to develop young people's knowledge.

The manager maintains the records confidentially and to a high standard. They are stored correctly and contribute to the understanding of the young person's life. Significant events relating to the protection of young people are promptly notified to the required authorities. This means appropriate action following any incident is taken to keep young people safe.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.