

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Judith Longden
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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 medium- to long-term care for up to six young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a flat to enable young people to acquire independence skills.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people achieve good outcomes particularly in education and in preparation for adulthood. Young people learn to manage and control their own behaviour and interact well with each other. Young people are protected from harm and feel safe in the home and the community. The home provides an outstanding quality of care that is well planned and meets the individual needs of young people. Staff and young people have excellent relationships and young people feel well cared for. One requirement is made in relation to sanctions and one recommendation is made, to record the time and length of staff supervision.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
17 (2001)	ensure the imposition of a financial penalty is not used as a disciplinary measure in respect of withholding or delaying pocket money. (Regulation 17 (2) (g))	20/10/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure the time and length of supervision is recorded. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in achieving positive outcomes. Progress and achievement is recorded and reviewed with young people in their key work meetings. As a result, they develop their confidence and self-esteem. Young people are helped to understand their background and family history. This enables them to explore their feelings and emotions and recognise how this affects their behaviour and care.

Young people are involved in developing a menu that provides a healthy, balanced diet and also includes their favourite food. They help with preparing and cooking meals. This means they benefit from developing useful skills and confidence. Health is discussed in key work sessions and young people are helped to understand their needs and how to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Their health is further promoted by the implementation of daily personal hygiene routines.

Young people enjoy a range of activities including bike riding, golf lessons, bowling and gardening. They are encouraged to participate in new activities and, as a result, develop skills and confidence. For example, young people participated in a cookery activity with a qualified chef teaching them a variety of skills and techniques.

Young people are achieving good outcomes in their education and in learning life skills in the home. All young people are engaged in full-time education or in employment and their attendance is good. Young people learn life skills in the home and further develop these in the independence training flat attached to the home. They are supported to understand finances and learn how to budget. As a result, young people continually learn and develop skills for adulthood.

Staff work with the leaving care team to ensure young people receive good support in transition to leaving care and approaching adulthood. Young people who have moved on from the home keep in touch and tell the staff how they are progressing.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their parents, family and friends. All contact made is recorded and reviewed in line with agreements made in their placement plans.

Quality of care

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

Extremely good placement plans are in place for all young people. Their identity and cultural needs are clearly identified and action plans detail how these needs are to be met. Their daily care reflects the individual requirements of their placement plan.

Young people are able to express their feelings, share their views and voice their opinions in all aspects of their care and in the running of the home. They contribute to their care plans and reviews with support from staff. Pre-review meetings are held with young people to gather their views and they are encouraged to attend the review to put these views forward.

Young people benefit from informal house meetings held at mealtimes around the table. Young people say it is like having a family discussion at the end of the day. They feel comfortable putting their views forward at these meetings but are also happy to discuss things with staff at any time. One young person said 'we can talk to them about anything'. As a result, young people are actively engaged in how the home operates and in their care.

Young people benefit from excellent relationships with staff and interact well with each other. Young people say they feel very well cared for and looked after; 'It's the best home I know of'. A social worker explained that one young person is 'loving being cared for'. Good use is made of key work sessions to discuss feelings, boundaries, respect and behaviour. This reinforces the very positive relationships.

Good health care plans ensure the individual health needs of young people are identified and actions are in place to meet these needs. Young people have access to various medical professionals and staff support them to attend appointments. Staff are trained in first aid and in administration of medication. Health is discussed at key work sessions where staff support young people to understand health issues such as smoking and alcohol use. Staff encourage young people to adopt a healthy diet and lifestyle. As a result the physical, emotional and psychological health of young people is promoted.

Staff maintain excellent links with college and training providers and the home has a designated education worker. This means the young people are able to access support and information about their education when they need to. Staff encourage young people to attend recruitment fairs and skills festivals to gain information about their future prospects. Good educational plans are made for the individual based on their needs and views. As a result young people are supported to achieve their educational potential.

Young people live in a large family home environment with access to a variety of rooms for activities and for relaxing. Access to a library and computers supports them in their studies. The home has its own independence training flat. This offers young people the opportunity to further develop skills learnt in the home, such as cooking and doing household chores. It also provides the experience of living alone for a few days. Staff help the young people deal with any issues of isolation and loneliness arising from this. The home is located close to local amenities and young people are encouraged to engage in community activities. As a result, young people are able to access a variety of activities to promote their learning and develop skills and confidence.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home provides an environment of care and support where bullying is not tolerated. Young people say that bullying is not an issue at the home but they are

aware of what to do if they are concerned. Good policies and procedures are in place for countering bullying. As a result, young people are protected from bullying.

Staff implement a positive behaviour management strategy where the use of physical restraint or intervention is used only as a last resort. Staff use verbal de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques. Staff and young people have good relationships and, as a result, staff are able to effectively challenge negative behaviour with young people. Behaviour is discussed at key work meetings and young people learn coping strategies to manage their own behaviour. Sanctions are imposed if necessary and reviewed with young people. These often relate to activities or reparation but there are occasions when pocket money is wrongly withheld or delayed. Positive behaviour is rewarded by positive consequences or incentives, such as an additional activity. As a result, young people interact positively with staff and each other and learn to manage their own behaviour.

The home has good policies and procedures for safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, handling allegations, recruitment and young people's risk assessments. Staff are trained in safeguarding and are clear on their role in the safeguarding process. There is good monitoring of safeguarding practices by the home's manager. Sound recruitment processes and the recording and monitoring of visitors to the home further ensure young people are protected from significant harm.

Young people are kept safe as a result of comprehensive individual risk assessments. Risks are identified in relation to activities and behaviour, and strategies to minimise them are implemented. Young people are supported to understand their own safety and how to protect themselves. As a result young people feel safe in the home and in the community. One young person said, 'staff work hard to keep me safe'.

The home has a good missing from care procedure and protocol developed with the police, local authority and local safeguarding board. Each young person has a missing from home risk assessment and procedure that details specific risks and how to manage any absence. The number of incidents of young people missing has reduced. Young people who are absent remain in phone contact. On their return they are seen by an independent person who carries out a safe and well check. Staff work with young people to explain the risks associated with going missing. This ensures young people are protected as far as possible.

Regular fire drills are held and fire alarm systems are checked as required. There is a comprehensive fire risk assessment and health and safety assessment for the building and equipment. As a result, the building is safe and appropriately secure.

Leadership and management

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

The home continues to improve the care it provides to young people. At the last inspection two recommendations were made that have been met. Room searches are

rarely performed and only carried out when there is an issue of safety. Searches are well documented and young people sign their agreement to a room search. As a result, the privacy of young people is respected. New staff have been recruited, the manager has applied for registration with Ofsted and the home has a new cook. This means that staffing is adequate at all times.

The home has a very good admissions policy and young people are welcomed to the home in a planned manner. The manager and staff review all possible referrals to maintain stability in the group dynamics with young people already in the home. As a result, young people feel valued and placements are appropriate.

Staff and young people are clear about the objectives and ethos of the home. Staff provide an excellent quality of service for young people in line with the home's Statement of Purpose. The home provides each young person with a welcome guide which details the service offered. This ensures young people are clear about the care and service provided.

The home is provided and managed by suitable personnel who are qualified and experienced. Staff are also experienced and well qualified and bring individual strengths to the team. Staff work well together and care for each other. This reflects in the quality of care provided to young people. Additional staff have been appointed and there is a minimum of two staff on duty at all times. This means young people's needs are met through the provision of sufficient staffing.

Staff are able to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through a variety of training opportunities to improve their competency. Staff benefit from a good handover procedure and good staff meetings. These offer support for staff and ensure continuity in the service to young people.

Staff receive further support through good quality regular supervision. There is a wide range of topics discussed including the professional development of staff and the care of individual young people. However, there is no time or length of supervision recorded.

The home has clear and effective procedures for monitoring the quality of the service provided and the welfare of the young people. The registered provider undertakes visits to the home in accordance with regulations and carries out checks to ensure the welfare of young people is monitored. The registered provider consults with young people to identify any areas for development to improve the quality of care provided. The manager monitors records kept by the home to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. Records are stored securely and information sharing is in accordance with data protection. All significant events relating to the protection of young people in the home are notified as appropriate and actions taken as required. As a result, young people are consulted about the quality of care they receive and how effectively their needs are met and their welfare and protection is monitored.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.

