

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Martha Nethaway
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is operated by a borough council.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

The effectiveness of the home in providing well planned care and promoting positive outcomes for all young people is adequate. The educational progress of a few of the young people at the home is not consistent and this, in part, creates uncertainty in relation to their academic achievement. Young people's health outcomes are not high enough because a few young people refuse to attend key health appointments such as dentists and the opticians.

Young people's views are regularly sought. Young people enjoy participating in 'circle time' and willingly share their views. A key strength of the home is the regular visits from the independent rights officer to further facilitate young people's engagement.

Young people enjoy good relationships with their peers. Staff show respect and care for the young people. Young people say they feel safe and are safe. However, an increased number of young people have gone missing from the home.

Leadership and management are inadequate as the home has been without a Registered Manager for some time. However, this has been due to exceptional circumstances and Ofsted have been fully briefed during this period. Decisive measures have been taken to address this area.

As a result of this visit, the home has been set two requirements and one recommendation. Areas for improvement include the need to address training and employment opportunities for young people over school age, timely visits for health care interventions and ensuring young people rarely go missing. Additionally, the

home must forward Ofsted a copy of the Statement of Purpose in a timely manner. The home is recommended to record and keep clear evidence of the qualifications and other relevant information of specialist professionals who visit the home. All these areas do not take away from the adequate progress and outcomes that young people are achieving.

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
4 (2001)	ensure the home notify Ofsted of any revision of the statement of purpose within 28 days (Regulation 5 (b))	31/12/2013
11 (2001)	promote and make proper provision for the welfare of young people accommodated there; specifically in relation to training and employment for young people over school age, accessing health care and ensuring young people rarely go missing. (Regulation 11)	31/12/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure all specialist professionals (e.g. educationalists, psychologists, therapists) are registered by the appropriate professional body. This is with regard to having evidence on site. (NMS 18.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **adequate**.

Young people develop a positive view of themselves. Some young people have developed self-discipline and take responsibility for their actions. Other young people, because of their emotional circumstances, are making more gradual progress. As a result, they are making adequate progress overall.

Young people broadly enjoy good health. Young people can directly access counselling services to support their emotional wellbeing. The majority of young people visit their doctor, dentist and optician. However, a few young people do not do so which compromises their health. Young people's educational experiences are

not always consistent. Some young people enjoy school. They enjoy full school attendance and are progressing well. However, a few young people are not reaching their full academic potential, specifically young people who are aged age 16. As a result, they are unable to make the informed choices about their future and they are not able to take advantage of career advice or work placements.

Young people's participation is a key element in their daily lives. They meet with the independent rights officer once a month. Young people enjoy meeting with their key worker to discuss and express opinions about their experiences. Young people identify their key workers as supportive and that they understand their needs. In addition, young people regularly take part in 'circle time' where they can discuss and make decisions about important matters in the home. One young person commented, 'We have been involved in decisions about improving our garden. We have now planted herbs, vegetables and some soft fruit.' As a consequence, this enhances young people's direct participation and contribution to the home.

Young people keep in contact with their family and friends that are important to them. Young people's welfare is promoted as all arrangements are regularly reviewed. One young person commented, 'I get to see my family and they also sometimes visit me here.' As a result, young people are able to invest in building positive relationships. This helps to maintain and strengthen their sense of identity and belonging.

Young people are developing skills as part of growing up. This includes money management, daily living skills and personal and social development. One young person commented, 'I am getting more confident. I am preparing myself for college by traveling on the bus independently.'

Quality of care

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

The quality of care is adequate because not all young people are benefiting consistently from their educational experiences. Similarly, not all young people's health needs specifically related to attending health appointments are fully met.

Young people broadly enjoy positive relationships. Young people benefit from a climate of openness and trust. They generally interact positively with peers and staff alike. Staff take time to build caring relationships and treat young people and each other with respect. An independent reviewing officer commented, 'The young person's progress has been good. Staff have worked incredibly hard and stabilised her behaviours.'

Young people's rights, participation and consultation are fully supported. Young people know and understand how to make a complaint. Young people say they have directly influenced activities, food, holiday plans and excursion day trips, local and afar. As a result, this encourages responsibility and to relate positively to others.

Care planning and its implementation is adequate. Young people benefit from the emotional support provided by staff. The partnership working with social workers and families is a key strength of the home. One social worker commented, 'This home provide a very nurturing environment and I cannot praise them high enough.'

Young people enjoy a sufficient number of activities. A few young people's activities are more limited to shopping and visiting friends through personal choice. Some young people enjoy activities such as youth clubs, swimming and other local amenities. As a result, this expands their confidence and self-esteem.

The cultural background and personal identity of young people are fully identified which ensures that they needs are positively met. Young people are living in a safe and supportive, environment. Staff collectively ensure that individuals are valued and respected.

The home is well designed and maintained. Young people enjoy a well-cared for environment. Young people each have their own bedroom with its own bathroom which preserves privacy and dignity. One young person commented, 'It's really nice and homely.'

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding is adequate because of the increased number of times that young people go missing since the last inspection. Staff follow the correct procedures and the home has been proactively in working at a multi-agency level to reduce this problem, including meetings with the social work team and police. This partnership work is now beginning to show an impact and has stabilised the number of missing from home events in the past month.

Young people say they are safe and feel safe. This is underpinned by the application of suitable practice, training and procedures in relation to child protection allegations, behaviour management and addressing bullying. As a result, this promotes the welfare of young people.

Young people's behaviour is generally well managed. The use of physical intervention is rare. Young people work towards earning rewards for positive behaviour. Young people say this has a positive impact. They regularly save for items that they choose. As result, these positive incentives motivate young people to behave well.

The home has in place appropriate recruitment and staff selection procedures. As a result, senior managers are confident that staff are suitable to work with vulnerable young people. However, information about specialist professionals, such as the qualifications and registration of counsellors and therapists, who visit the home is not available. This is an administrative issue and has no adverse impact on young people's outcomes.

Health and safety is given a clear priority. This is reflected in young people's individual risk assessments which are regularly reviewed. Young people are additionally protected because they participate in fire drills so that they know what actions to take in the event of an emergency.

Leadership and management

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

Leadership and management are inadequate because the home has been without a registered manager for over 36 weeks. The underpinning reasons are due to exceptional circumstances and the provider has openly kept Ofsted informed. The provider has quickly responded by appointing another interim manager who has submitted their application to Ofsted without delay.

The home has a clear Statement of Purpose in place which has been reviewed although Ofsted did not receive an updated copy. The facilities and services at the home reflect accurately the practice taking place at the home. The home is adequately resourced. There are clear partnerships working with schools, the transition and leaving care team, community health professionals and the youth offending team. The home is securing adequate outcomes for young people.

The home has addressed the one recommendation from the last inspection. The home has safely disposed of the broken trampoline.

The quality assurance programme of the home is progressing. Each month an external independent visitor visits the home. Regular discussions take place with young people to gather their views. Staff care and practice is observed. The home's leadership and management team always take action to address any shortfalls. In addition, the home completes a self-audit report on a six monthly basis. From the findings of these, leaders and managers are taking appropriate action to improve.

The arrangements for staffing are suitable. Staff are qualified to work in residential care and receive appropriate levels of supervision. There is also an on-going programme of professional training. As a result, young people benefit because staff enhance their care through new learning and new ways of working. This promotes responsibility, accountability and competence.

Young people's records are suitably managed. Young people's records reflect accurately their time living at the home and chart their progress. Young people are encouraged to attend their reviews and share their opinions about their care and plans for the future. This inclusive practice ensures that young people remain the focus.

The home's notification system is effective. The home notifies all the relevant agencies and fully cooperates to promote the welfare of young people.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.