

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Lindsey Blickem
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for seven young people between the ages of 11 to under 18 years. The home accommodates young people who have emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties. The home is situated in a quiet residential area close to the seashore. The accommodation comprises of a dining room, lounge, kitchen, laundry and games room. Young people have their own bedrooms. In addition, there are two semi-independent flats which each have their own entrance, dining/living area, kitchen and bathroom. There is a grassed garden to the front and rear of the building and an area for off-road parking.

Summary

At this unannounced full inspection, all key standards were inspected.

This is a good service in all outcome areas. Young people receive care and support from staff who are well trained, competent and caring. The relationships between staff and young people are very positive and affectionate and there is a very homely and family atmosphere within the home. Access to activities is very good and young people are constructively occupied whilst not attending education, employment or training and they are actively involved with planning for holidays, local events and the day-to-day running of the home. Consultation is good and young people contribute openly to how the home is managed and are able to express views, opinions and choice which are actively listened to.

Administration is very good and efficient, records are generally very well maintained and staff are consistent and clear when making written records. Health needs are well managed and young people receive appropriate care and support with specific health needs and the administration of medication is safe and efficient.

Access to education, employment and training is very good and young people are well supported with individualised education and training opportunities. There are also good opportunities for young people who are planning to leave care and they are given opportunities to learn skills necessary for independent living.

Behaviour is managed very effectively and difficult situations or incidents are handled sensitively. Sanctions are used positively to ensure young people understand the impact of their behaviour whilst balancing the need to show understanding when young people become upset. There is good emphasis given to the need for young people to give back to the community when they have behaved poorly.

The manager has cultivated and maintained a very child focused and caring home for young people who achieve good outcomes as a result of the environment in which they live.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager was asked to make improvements to records made in relation to young people's views following incidents, complaints and fire safety checks. Good progress has been made to

achieving this ensuring that records accurately reflect practice within the home and that young people's views are evidenced well.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy a healthy, well balanced and substantial diet. There is good consultation with young people about the weekly menus and their individual likes and dislikes are accommodated well. Menus are regularly discussed both formally and informally and is a regular feature in young people's meetings. The kitchen is a centre point for social interaction and young people enjoy the opportunity to be involved with the preparation of meals and for some older residents there are good opportunities to learn about cooking in preparation for independent living. Mealtimes are very sociable with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Young people's health needs are well known to staff and there is good written evidence both within placement plans and current files about what the specific health needs of young people are and how they will be met. Regular appointments are made with the dentist and optician and young people see a doctor when they need to. Where there are specialist health professionals involved this is evident within the placement plans and young people are encouraged to engage with them. Overall health needs are well known and well met.

The system for administering medication is good. Clear and detailed records are made of any medicines given to a young person and when medication is refused or forgotten this is clearly recorded. Medication is, however, rarely missed. Two staff sign whenever medication is given and an accurate balance of remaining medication is recorded. Practice in relation to administering medication is consistent, safe and promotes the overall health needs of young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Privacy and confidentiality is preserved well, young people enjoy time alone and free from unnecessary intrusion whilst being appropriately monitored to ensure their welfare is safeguarded. Discussions about or with young people are held in private or are discreet. Written information is securely kept in a locked office and only accessible to staff.

The system for receiving and dealing with complaints is efficient, transparent and generally well managed. There are few formal complaints from young people although where there have been issues raised, these have been dealt with quickly and appropriately by the manager. Written feedback from the manager to young people is clear and sensitive and manages delicate situations well in terms of addressing the complaint whilst taking account of context. Complaints and feedback is actively invited from professionals involved with the home and young people who move on. The comments received so far are extremely positive and reflects the good service the home consistently provides. Young people's views and issues are managed well ensuring they are actively listened too.

All staff receive training in safeguarding and the home has a very open and transparent culture. Staff are competent in dealing with safeguarding issues and the manager is highly competent in managing concerns and issues as well as the protective, child focused culture evident within the home. The home has good communication with other agencies, including the police, which ensures practice is consistent with local safeguarding policies and procedures.

Young people enjoy a very calm, relaxed and positive environment where people relate to one another generally very well. Bullying behaviour is robustly and sensitively addressed and managed and positive relationships are encouraged and nurtured very well creating a harmonious atmosphere.

Young people who are missing from home are appropriately reported and monitored within agreed procedures. The thresholds in terms of managing risk are good and appropriate to the needs of individual young people. There is consistency in relation to how and when young people are reported and incidents have the oversight of a senior member of staff. Good, clear records are made of incidents and evidence good practice in this area ensuring young people's welfare is safeguarded.

All staff receive training in the use of de-escalation and physical restraint ensuring that young people are managed consistently and safely during difficult situations. Good records are made following incidents where restraint has been necessary and evidence that these are managed consistently. Young people are invited to express their views following incidents which are recorded as part of the overall written report when they choose to say something. Restraint is used appropriately in terms of where there are risks to young people and staff.

The use of sanctions is generally very positive with a strong reparative element within how each situation is managed. Young people are encouraged to consider their actions when they have behaved poorly or inappropriately and the consequences are generally agreed in consultation with them. Young people are invited to complete additional chores by way of reparation or may have pocket money deducted if this is more appropriate and effective. Some incidents are managed by not issuing any sanction where it is considered behaviour has been a result of upset, instead additional time is spent with them to try and resolve issues that may be upsetting. This individualised and caring approach to managing poor behaviour is a real benefit to young people in allowing them to consider their actions whilst also being given the opportunity to explore personal issues that may affect their behaviour.

Young people are protected from the risk of fire through regular checks and tests of fire alarms, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers and through conducting regular fire drills. Faults are reported in a timely fashion and are resolved quickly.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are good. Checks include CRB check, two written references and work history and these are contained within their personnel files. Files also contain identification, including photo ID as well as health assessments. The vetting process ensures that all appropriate checks are in place prior to staff working with young people to ensure they are properly safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people are given good individual support through key work sessions and general day-to-day support from staff. There are very positive and affectionate relationships between staff and young people and the home has a family atmosphere which is actively encouraged by the manager. Young people are nurtured and cared for relative to their individual needs as well as being supported to be part of the larger group. Young people access external support from other agencies such as health professionals, employment and training and care is provided

on a highly individualised basis ensuring that care given is relative to individual need and potential.

Attendance at education, employment and training is generally very good and each young person has individual education or training packages in place which is tailored to their specific needs. Support in attending and achieving educationally is very good and staff take great care in ensuring that young people enjoy learning whilst planning effectively for their future when they move into adulthood. Staff adopt appropriate parental roles in ensuring that young people get to school or training on time and are appropriately dressed and equipped for each day.

Young people are very involved with planning and preparing for a holiday in Turkey which has included buying new clothes and packing as well as being actively involved in fundraising for the trip. Young people have made an admirable contribution to bidding for money from local youth agencies as well as being involved with setting up a refreshment stall for a local event. The upcoming holiday is a source of great excitement and is a terrific opportunity for the young people to go abroad, for some, it is the first opportunity of its kind. Activities on a day-to-day basis are varied and enjoyable and include trips to the cinema, go karting and swimming in the sea, young people generally enjoy an active and fulfilling social life which is supported and encouraged by staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Placement plans contain relevant and detailed information about the needs of young people and how those needs will be met. Plans include details of health issues, education and contact arrangements and are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that staff have access to up-to-date information. Plans are simply formatted and contain only information which is pertinent and relevant enabling staff to effectively care for young people.

Young people's care arrangements are reviewed through the Looked After Children (LAC) review system and minutes are available within the young people's files. The reviews are effective in determining young people's short, medium and long term needs and how those needs are met or will be met through further provision. There is good evidence through the review system that young people make good progress whilst living in the home and their care arrangements are adapted to suit their specific needs at specific times including when they are preparing for independence.

Contact arrangements are appropriately and sensitively managed by the home and young people enjoy relative freedom in contacting their families. There is access to a phone in a private room or young people can choose to make a call from the staff office. Contact arrangements and issues are detailed within placement plans which ensures staff are aware of any issues to enable them to manage arrangements effectively and consistently. There is a private family room for young people to have contact with their family or staff transport young people to and from contact and provide support if necessary.

Young people receive excellent support with moving on from the home in particular with regards to preparation for leaving care or with independent living. Moving out is managed sensitively and staff work hard to ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary skills to ensure they move on successfully. Young people who are new to the home have a very positive experience and quickly feel comfortable given the high level of care and support they receive.

Young people actively participate in the running of the home by appropriately expressing views both on a day-to-day basis and through regularly held young people's meetings. Meetings are formalised and effective in determining what the views and wishes of young people are and enable staff to actively respond to issues raised. Menus, activities and holidays are regular items and staff work hard to accommodate choice. Young people are also actively involved with fundraising and planning for holidays as well as having their day-to-day wishes and views actively listened to.

The relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive and there is genuine affectionate relationships which helps create a family environment. Young people are very respectful towards staff which is a reflection of the respect and care given to them. The manager has cultivated and maintained a very positive environment where staff are responsive to young people in a very sensitive and caring way but with firm boundaries.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people enjoy living in a very spacious, clean, tidy and well maintained home. All young people have their own bedrooms which they are able to personalise and the communal areas are well furnished and reasonably decorated. There is a dedicated room for family visits and there is separation of boys and girls bathroom areas. The flats dedicated for young people on independence programmes is very well kept and equipped and creates good opportunities for young people to experience semi independence. The home is very large and is about to undergo a complete refurbishment which will be managed in stages over the coming six months. Planning for the refurbishment has been meticulous and takes account of the comfort and wellbeing of young people living there.

Young people are given good support with preparation for leaving the home and with learning skills for independent living. There are dedicated flats within the home for young people who are on independence programmes which are reasonably self contained although young people continue to be part of the larger community. Young people have access to and actively engage with training and employment which is specifically designed to help them learn skills necessary for independent living including budgeting and domestic tasks. Staff are very committed to young people moving on positively and successfully.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Written information about the services provided to young people is good. The Statement of Purpose provides comprehensive information about the running of the home and how care will be given. All required areas are covered including education, health and safeguarding and is formatted in a reader friendly style. The children's guide is an appropriately streamlined version of the Statement of Purpose providing young people with all the necessary information about the home and the care they should expect to receive whilst living there.

Staff are well supported in their role in caring for young people. There are good training opportunities including safeguarding, Unisafe (de-escalation and physical restraint training), NVQ 3 and first aid. Some staff have received further training opportunities including the degree in social work which is actively supported by the manager who has recently completed the degree. Training is well managed and where there is further training required for specific

members of staff this is identified and acted upon. Young people benefit from a professionally trained staff group whose training needs are identified and well met.

Staff receive excellent support from the manager and management team through regular formal supervision called 'reflective supervision' which requires staff to give a reflective account in relation to their practice. The manager has been very successful in creating a very child focused, dedicated and committed staff team. Young people benefit from having positive and consistent day-to-day interaction with staff who balance professionalism, care and affection very well. This creates a very homely environment whilst ensuring that the young people's specific needs are well met. Administrative systems are efficient and there is an open, transparent and consistent approach to behaviour management which is a positive reflection on how well staff are managed.

Monthly visits on behalf of the registered provider are completed as required and reports of those visits are produced in a timely manner. The reports give a good account of the care received by young people and also provide a good overview of the administration systems. These visits contribute positively to the management of the home by providing a relatively objective view of care and practice.

Case files are well maintained and contain all the required information. The information in case files provides good information about the progress young people make whilst living in the home and are kept securely in the staff office.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Young people receive individualised care and their specific needs are well met. The culture of the home reflects the backgrounds of young people cared for and there are excellent opportunities for young people to participate within the local community.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

There are no recommendations.