

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Linda Bond
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is owned by a private limited company. It is registered to care for three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Care packages usually include the provision of education at the company school.

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 **outstanding**.

The home provides an excellent level of care. The outcomes achieved by the young people are exceptional. Young people thrive in a warm, homely and nurturing environment. A very dedicated and motivated staff team provides excellent continuity of care. Excellent internal and external management ensures that the home's performance is effectively monitored and the home is enabled to continually improve outcomes for young people. Staff are led by a manager and management team that utilise skills, experience and knowledge to remain current in their practice. As a result young people have varied and extensive experiences that maximises their potential.

Robust safeguarding policies are implemented by an attentive, knowledgeable and well trained staff team. Staff have developed strong and positive relationships generating a culture of trust and openness. Staff model positive and respectful behaviour thereby promoting good values and beliefs. Consultation and inclusion is at the very heart of the home. Young people, parents and providers are very positive of the care, and safety is paramount.

Individual assessments are of an excellent quality and provide staff with an in depth understanding of young people's emotional and social needs. Staff focus young people on their educational potential and promote positive outcomes and consistent progress.

No requirements or recommendations are put in place following this inspection.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people with complex and challenging needs are supported in really homely environment where practice is excellent. All staff are committed to ensuring that the individual needs of young people are carefully planned, monitored and evaluated. These core principals are underpinned by a very comprehensive care planning process which combines young people's holistic needs and well planned interventions. The values of respecting, nurturing and understanding young people as individuals are strong and consistent and are threaded seamlessly throughout practice. As a result young people have developed positive, trusting and constructive relationships. Evidence can be found of this from discussions and observations of staff members.

Young people's psychological and emotional progress is noteworthy and continues over the time of their placement. Observation of young people provides evidence of developing confidence, maturity, emotional resilience, and communication skills. They present as exceptionally positive about their placement and parents confidently describe how they have benefitted and developed. Furthermore records indicate that young people's behaviours do not place them at risk and measurable progress is reported. Staff provide young people with opportunities to explore their family circumstances. Tools are used for example; the 'All About Me' file that collates information, certificates, awards and memorabilia that helps young people develop a real sense of identity and understanding of their background.

Young people enjoy very good health and are supported to live healthy lifestyles. Menus reflect a nutritionally balanced choice, and as a result young people are physically thriving and growing. Staff maintain excellent links with local health services and good access to specialist services is available. This includes the organisation commissioning assessments for young people. In doing so young people do not suffer unnecessary delay in having their needs assessed and support provided. Further to this staff are equipped with tools to monitor, record and track the physical and emotional well-being of each young person.

The educational achievements are excellent. Support and encouragement by staff to attend school is resulting in young people having 100% attendance. Consequently young people are reaching their educational milestones and are developing a healthy attitude to learning.

Relationships and contact with family and friends are strongly supported and every effort is made to maintain, restore and support contact with all people who are important to them. Any restrictions on contact are well documented and agreed by all professionals involved. This is regularly reviewed and young people's views and wishes are taken into account.

Quality of care

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

The emphasis placed on identifying and supporting young people's holistic needs is outstanding, and the opportunities for exploring young people's emotional and psychological health are central to the care planning processes. Young people know they are being supported as a result of the on-going and consistent dialogue between them and staff. Changes to planned interventions are in consultation with parents, staff, social workers and the young people.

Staff have high, but realistic and constructive expectations of the young people and these foster caring and supportive relationships. The home provides a warm and nurturing environment allowing young people to reflect, relax and grow. Observations of young people confirm that they feel safe and enjoy living at the home. Further to this parents report that young people have 'brilliant' relationships with staff and know they can speak with them if they had any concerns. Positive relationships generate an open and inclusive culture of consultation. This includes young people's council, weekly house meetings and key worker sessions that formulate plans that the young people can work towards. Staff encourage young people to trust, be honest, challenge and as a result contribute to the way the home is run.

Reports and recordings suggest young people are in excellent health. The home ensures that the health care needs of young people are clearly identified and comprehensive health plans are developed and regularly reviewed. The home supports young people to access health care professionals and ensures that detailed records are kept of such visits. The home has robust systems in place for the management of medicines and ensures that risk assessments are completed and regularly reviewed for all young people.

Placement plans address the unique differences and strengths of the young people and document a wide range of imaginative approaches to their needs. The home's approach to placement planning is one of its particular strengths and is strongly supported by the provider. Care plans are highly specific and include assessments of exceptional quality and depth. This is achieved by additional input from external health professionals dedicated to this task and are independently commissioned by management. Staff are offered clear and outcome focused guidance and are given good opportunity to consult clinical experts. Young people are fully involved and contribute to their placement plans.

Staff take an active part in the education of the young people, supporting if necessary in class, and promoting excellent educational and vocational opportunities. Achievement is celebrated and young people receive all necessary support to make progress. The home maintains good communication with young people's educational placements and staff attend school reviews as well as parents' evenings and other special events.

Young people enjoy meals that are varied, nutritious and meet their individual dietary needs. The home promotes the involvement of the young people in the planning of the menus and they are encouraged to eat healthily and take exercise.

Staff demonstrate a very good knowledge of healthy and fun cooking and good manners are promoted and have been established during meal times.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home's approach to safeguarding helps young people to develop a strong sense of safety and well-being. Robust systems are in place to protect young people from significant harm. Observation of young people and comments made by parents confirm that young people are and feel protected, and are helped to understand how to protect themselves. The home promotes a culture of openness and trust where young people can feel confident in discussing any concerns or worries with staff. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and know what constitutes good safe care practice. They respond promptly to any allegations or suspicions of harm. Good links are maintained with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and its contact details are readily available to staff.

The staff are committed in ensuring that young people's safety is promoted and they are extremely flexible and supportive in enabling young people when in the community.

Young people choose not to abscond or go missing. However, the home has agreed arrangements with the local police and staff are provided with guidance if young people are absent or missing from the home. Robust documentation demonstrates the action that staff would take when addressing such matters, and the action taken once young people return. The home has developed excellent tools for the monitoring and recording of sanctions and physical interventions and young people's safety and emotional well-being remains central to the use of them.

There are currently no reported incidents or concerns relating to bullying or complaints. However, the staff and young people are aware of the procedures to follow. The home has developed robust protocols and guidelines in relation to the management of young people's behaviours. There have been minimal incidents of restraint or physical intervention. The home operates an excellent system of de-escalation and positive reinforcement. Excellent individual behaviour management plans and a range of risk assessments provide staff with clear strategies for managing young people with challenging behaviour. Debrief sessions are automatically held with staff and a reflective tool, designed for young people is used to help them in respect of any incident. As a result staff are providing them with the opportunity to reflect on their presenting behaviour.

Health and safety policy, practice guidelines and vetting and recruitment procedures are all well established to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. No specific health and safety issues were identified during this inspection. Risk assessments are carried out to identify potential sources of harm and ensure that staff and young people are safe from fire and other avoidable hazards.

Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

Leadership and management

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

The Statement of Purpose describes clearly the home's overall ethos, values and principles and is regularly reviewed and updated. A colourful and age appropriate young people's guide outlines the level of service young people can expect to receive and how they will be cared for. Further to this staff and young people are looking to develop a film version of the guide. Staff have an excellent understanding of these core documents and clear processes are in place to ensure that young people are familiar with the content. Action has been taken to ensure that the one requirement and one recommendation made at interim inspection has been met.

Young people benefit from the supportive leadership style which empowers staff, thereby encouraging them to use their initiative. Staff are extremely confident with the management support they receive. This stems from the quality of the induction process through to on-going formal and informal supervision arrangements. The deployment and numbers of staff on duty at any one time is indicative of the needs of the young people. The management team ensures that staffing levels take in to account extra responsibilities. For example, staff representing young people at reviews and attending meetings.

Management and staff are genuinely enthusiastic about their work with young people. This is disseminated throughout and the dynamics of the staff team create a very safe and reassuring environment. The management team are experienced and skilled in creating a home whereby young people can be themselves and staff can develop their professional skills. The management structures in place are sound and management are accessible to staff, young people and others significant to them. The current team has worked together for some time and provide young people with excellent continuity of care.

Excellent internal and external monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that the conduct and the performance is regularly evaluated. The manager routinely and with rigour analyses the data in order to identify patterns and trends within the home, and will use these to inform Regulation 34 monitoring, the home's development plan and daily management of the home. All notifiable events are reported appropriately. The manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and constantly drives improvement and better outcomes for young people. Well documented monthly monitoring visits on behalf of the registered provider include meeting with the young people and provides space for dialogue and feedback. Evidence of consultation with young people is found extensively within the home's monitoring documents. Young people's social workers and parents are kept well informed and are regularly updated of their progress. Significant events relating to the protection and welfare of young people are routinely notified to all relevant parties.

Training opportunities for staff are extensive and wide ranging. Staff are supported in obtaining professionally recognised qualifications such as National Vocational Qualifications. The management team is proactive and responsive to staff development. Staff use their training wisely and can associate this with young people's support needs.

Staff have excellent opportunity and access to supervision, support and training to develop their skills and understanding of children's needs and behaviour. Managers have substantial experience in supporting staff teams and in working with young people. Staff are supervised regularly and managers appraise performance formally. Training and development needs are identified and met.

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.