

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Simon Morley
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is privately run and is registered to provide care for up to two young people of either gender with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Young people receive outstanding levels of care, support and guidance which helps them make significant progress in numerous areas taking their starting points on admission to the home into consideration. Young people thrive in a nurturing, supportive environment. Staff have high aspirations for young people which contribute to their positive progress, particularly in their education, behaviour, social skills and improving their confidence and self-esteem.

The care and support of young people comes from a highly experienced and skilled staff team led by a strong and effective manager. Young people feel safe living at the home and benefit significantly from living there. Young people say the best thing about the home is the staff who work there, 'its just the way they are that helps'.

A strong culture of safeguarding and protection ensures young people are kept as safe as possible and helps to greatly reduce their risk-taking behaviours. Staff work extremely well in providing a consistent and committed level of care that allows young people to learn to express how they feel in appropriate ways. Young people are relaxed and comfortable around the staff and are positive in their views of how staff look after them. Young people are very happy at the home and a wide range of professionals are highly complimentary about the service.

The home is exceptionally well managed and there are extremely robust monitoring procedures, which are reflective, evaluative and detailed. This helps put the needs of young people continually at the forefront of all practice and development. There is good ambition and positive energy for continuous improvement.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Outcomes for young people and their life chances are significantly increased from living in this home. Young people benefit from the nurturing care and access to specialist services, very effective multi-agency working and excellent management.

Compared to their starting points young people make good progress in developing a positive self-view and emotional resilience overcoming past trauma and hardships in their lives. Young people are able to talk to staff and use specialist health services to develop their knowledge and understanding of themselves and their backgrounds. Young people open up and talk about important issues in their lives and how they feel which helps them manage difficult situations better. It also helps young people make and sustain attachments as part of their stable placements.

Young people explore personal, social and health issues about their backgrounds, relationships, and personal safety with staff and other professionals. As a result young people develop their knowledge and understanding about improving their lifestyles and make more sensible choices. Young people also make strong progress in using support services more to help promote their emotional well-being.

Young people develop their advocacy skills and are positively involved in their care and in the running of the home. Young people learn to focus on their future and develop practical skills such as cooking, to help their transition to adulthood. As they develop more confidence and social skills young people start to pay more attention to improving their appearance and personal hygiene.

Young people learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles and the support from staff helps them to engage better with a range of health services. Young people also learn about healthy eating and have plenty of opportunities for physical exercise. Despite the encouragement and persistency of staff, young people do not make best use of this support often staying indoors. Young people refrain from alcohol and substance misuse and dangerous behaviour that puts them at risk of offending significantly reduces.

Educational attendance and achievement improves well in relation to young people's individual starting points and ability. Young people who have previously struggled to attend are now much better engaged in their education and learning. Staff continually work with education professionals to improve achievements and to help young people maintain their attendance. Young people benefit from the flexible approach and support that meets their needs and helps them learn at home which makes their education a positive experience.

Quality of care

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

Young people experience a very high quality care that is driven by the organisation's directors who take an active part in the home and care of young people.

Young people enjoy extremely positive and healthy relationships with staff who are sensitive, caring and inspiring. As a result they begin to trust adults, respond positively to support and engage more with external support services such as counselling and mental health services. A young person's reviewing officer said, 'this is the most settled, happiest and healthiest I have seen the young person'. The highly individualised support keeps young people's needs at the centre of how the home is run.

Staff skilfully use a nurturing approach to support young people to address any issues in an open and honest atmosphere. Young people feel listened to and after any incidents of poor behaviour they can reflect on their actions and talk to staff or other professionals about how to improve. The one to one staffing levels supports young people to talk to staff whenever they need to. Young people know how to complain and are confident to do so. The strong nurturing approach ensures young people's feelings, views and wishes have a key role in their care and development of their care plans. Young people choose what to eat, wear, buy their own clothes and follow their hobbies, interests and chosen lifestyles.

There is an effective admissions procedure which ensures young people's diverse needs including gender, culture, disability, faith, and religious beliefs are identified before young people move in. This information is used to inform individual placement plans. These plans are of a high quality which focus on young people's individual needs. Staff are thoughtful and considerate in ensuring young people are cared for in line with their placement plans.

Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people in the home regardless of the challenges they present. For example this includes work with other agencies and creative support for young people who struggle to socialise. Very effective use is also made of local police community support officers. This helps young people improve their behaviour, increase their personal responsibility and develop better relationships with others. Young people feel comfortable with staff and accept the positive guidance and support, which is provided to a very high standard. Other agencies, including the police, placing authorities and solicitors have commented very positively about the efficiency of staff, the quality of support and levels of communication.

Staff support young people to attend school and if needed to benefit from home tuition. Staff liaise well with schools to help support young people with their targets and achievements. Staff help young people celebrate their achievements, certificates, artwork and home cooking. Young people also benefit from the wide opportunities to develop their social and leisure skills.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

safe.

The safety of young people is given a high priority. Practice and procedures are excellent at helping keep young people safe and free from harm. Young people report that they feel safe and protected in the home. They can talk to staff about any anxieties or concerns and know that these will be treated seriously. Young people's individual care plans clearly identify potential risks. There are detailed risk management strategies in place, frequently reviewed, that staff are familiar with and implement consistently and effectively. This allows young people to take reasonable risks appropriate to their age while enabling them to grow and develop.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and robust. The Registered Manager is highly efficient in communicating with other agencies and professionals about any concerns or issues affecting young people's safety. In her absence the staff are skilled and experienced to be able to deputise. All staff are trained in a range of safeguarding issues including children and young people who are vulnerable to exploitation. The staff team are highly effective in reducing young people's risky behaviour including young people missing from home and aggression that could lead to risks of offending.

Staff provide young people with a range of incentives, rewards, activities and leisure opportunities to encourage them not to go missing and engage with what the home has to offer. When young people are missing, staff go to extensive lengths to keep in contact and search potential locations where young people may be staying. The staff team work very effectively with other agencies such as police, placing authorities and the local authority to ensure young people return home safely.

Staff are very successful in promoting positive behaviour, again using other agencies and professionals such as health professionals and local police community support officers. As a result young people's behaviour significantly improves since their admission. Staff are able to use their strong relationships with young people to encourage good behaviour and resolve difficult situations without recourse to physical intervention. This is a key strength and adds to the homely, nurturing environment young people enjoy.

The environment is physically safe and secure with a good standard of health and safety checks in place. Fire safety procedures are robust with regular checks carried out of fire safety equipment and regular fire drills so young people know what to do in the event of a fire. Recruitment procedures are thorough ensuring only appropriate staff are employed to work in the home. Young people have recently been involved in developing recruitment procedures and are able to influence who is recruited. For example young people have chosen an interview question, 'Is it appropriate to restrain children?'

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a home which is led by a very effective Registered Manager supported by a highly efficient and skilled staff team. The strength of leadership is generated by the commitment and responsibility of the Registered Provider to ensure young people receive high quality care. As a result staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic about continuous improvement. The excellent quality of leadership and management enables young people to make good progress with their development and achievements.

There are high staffing levels both during the day and night to meet the needs of young people living at the home. This level of staffing is particularly effective at safeguarding young people when they go missing from the home. Staff feel extremely well supported, regular supervision, team meetings and daily shift handovers provide plenty of opportunities to discuss their role, responsibilities and young people's needs. Staff receive a wide range of training and are skilled in providing young people with a caring, nurturing environment. Strong, close relationships between staff and young people helps young people feel safe, cared for and develop trusting relationships. This gives an effective base for the high quality of care staff provide.

Monitoring of standards and young people's progress has improved, it is rigorous and highly effective. The comprehensive, robust and regular monitoring of the management of the home and quality of care ensures that young people achieve good outcomes in their lives. The levels of monitoring by the manager and provider are outstanding and clearly highlight the progress young people make. Along with reflection by the manager and staff the monitoring processes focus on how further improvements can be made to the high quality of care. For example young people have been included in writing a new children's guide to the home adding a perspective and view of young people based on their experiences of living there.

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.