

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pat Stanton
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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 care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties, aged between 10 and 17 years.

The home is a detached bungalow. The accommodation includes a small lounge, an open-plan kitchen, dining area and single bedrooms for young people. The home provides education in a separate school building located in the grounds. There is a large garden for the young people to use at the rear of the house. The home is situated in a rural village, approximately six miles from the nearest town.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides consistent and well planned care, which means that the outcomes for young people are good. Young people make good progress through their placement; and the young people and staff recognise and celebrate progress and achievement. All of the young people are complementary regarding their placement, and feel that the service helps them within all areas of their lives. The high level of qualified and motivated staff is an obvious strength within the home, as this positively supports the care of young people. Young people benefit from sound relationships with staff and feel adults care about their welfare. Sound safeguarding practice promotes the safety of young people who feel safe within the home.

Areas for the home's development include the need to update some policies and provide up-to-date literature for young people to read appropriate to age in the home. Also there is no approved record of homely remedy medication for children. A copy of the latest inspection report and the new national minimum standards or regulations have not been made available for staff. Some parts of the home are not decorated to a good standard and not all avoidable hazards to young people are being avoided.

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
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28 (2001)	ensure where a child has a designated teacher, the name and phone number of that designated teacher is included in the case records of children accommodated in the home (Regulation 28(1) Schedule 3)	17/05/2011
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person establishes a maintains a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals, and improves the quality of care provided in the children's home. (Regulation 34(1) (a) (b) (2) (3))	30/11/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure children have access to a range of educational resources in the home to support their learning which includes up-to-date literature appropriate to age (NMS 8.2)
- ensure there is a written approved record of all homely remedy medication given to children during their placement (NMS 6.15)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment that is well maintained and decorated; avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with domestic setting (MNS 10.3)
- ensure copies of the latest inspection report and new national minimum standards and regulations are available to all members of staff, children living in the home, children's parents/carers and on request to responsible authorities of children living in the home. (NMS 21.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people develop their own identities through supportive staff and access to personal interests in the community. Young people enjoy a balanced diet and active lifestyles, which keeps them healthy. Young people access suitable medical and mental health services, which could include confidential appointments with their own doctor and other health care providers. This means they receive personalised and age-appropriate healthcare.

Young people have good attendance at school or college, and make good use of their learning opportunities. These opportunities include work experience programmes. Young people make good progress in educational programmes and their positive achievements are clearly recognised.

Individuals enjoy consistent opportunities to plan for the group's activities and décor plans. Young people see the results of their ideas, which include their own choice of activity, music preference and bedroom décor. Young people are well informed and consulted over their own placement plans and included in decisions about any changes that may affect their future. This promotes a collaborative culture within the home, which gives young people a good degree of control over their life. Young people make good use of independent or accompanied access to community. Activities and resources include days out, sports clubs, visiting youth clubs and family.

Young people benefit from consistent and well facilitated contact with their families and significant people in their lives. Planned meetings are enjoyed by individuals and telephone calls are received in private.

Young people make good use of opportunities to practise and develop life skills, at their own personal pace. This means that individuals manage their own money, use public transport and complete domestic chores which help them prepare for adult life. Older young people are positively involved in further educational opportunities. This demonstrates the group's commitment to continuing education and preparation for employment.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect and benefit from individualised support in line with their needs and wishes from independent specialists. Young people say the staff are good and "they have sorted me out". Staff encourage young people to develop skills linked to their ability which are highlighted in care plans. Young people complete tasks they are interested in to achieve their goals and aspirations. Examples include young people participating in football, horse riding and music. Staff are able to communicate well with young people. Consequently young people enjoy positive and trusting relationships with staff.

Young people are supported and encouraged to attend and achieve in education. The home has a registered independent school regulated by Ofsted at the homes where young who are not in mainstream education can attend. The home supports young person who have to travel to college and young people confirm they successfully pass exams, which enable them to progress into their chosen college. However records do not detail children's named teacher and contact number to fully support the relationship between the home and school for the benefit of the young people.

Young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported by staff to engage in leisure activities. The home is set up to offer a range of fun, leisure and educational activities which are planned in advance with the inclusion of all young people accommodated; however the home does not fully support this by providing young people with age appropriate up-to-date books or literature. Young people say they enjoy the level of activities which includes: trips to theme parks, pop concerts and football clubs. One young person says "I enjoy horse riding and youth club". Young people have access to transport provided by staff, which enables young people to access leisure activities in the community and visit family.

Young people in the home are appropriately placed there. Young people's needs are assessed appropriately and care plans outline how these needs are met. Care plans contain good records which are updated appropriately and include all relevant details regarding young people's needs. Staff complete records which include information about care, diet and support given to young people.

Young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home. Staff, young people and family contribute effectively to a young person's review and this ensures that any decisions are implemented into the daily care plan. The report provides up-to-date information, through discussion, as to how young people's individual needs or any concerns are met. Their needs are reviewed regularly and young people confirm they are able contribute to their review and planned care.

Young people are able to maintain constructive contact as deemed appropriate by the placing authority with families, friends and other people who play a significant role in their lives. Individual plans contain information regarding contact and details of family who may visit the home.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives in line with their individual needs. Staff communicate effectively with young people which results in them being able to respond, making their needs known. As a result young people are helped to make decisions about their lives and influence the way in which the home is run. Staff record young people's likes and dislikes on profiles which are updated regularly and understood by staff.

There are procedures in place to be followed which indicate that any complaint is addressed without delay and procedures observed at inspection evidenced young people know how to make a complaint and feel confident appropriate action will be taken. There are no complaints recorded against the service.

Young people in placement are well-presented and have appropriate clothing and belongings to meet their needs. They receive pocket money and appropriate allowance to help purchase clothing while accommodated. Young people have a locked area to store any valuables and money held for young people is managed appropriately. Young people's clothing and personal requisites are fully met.

Young people live in a home which provides sufficient space to meet their needs, although some parts of the home are in need re-decoration, for example the kitchen. Some young people have broken furniture and limited hanging space for clothes. The home is clean and has a large secure garden for young people to enjoy and have fun in.

Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. They have opportunities to plan, shop and prepare meals. Young people eat meals at the table and share social occasions. Young people confirm they help decide menus and shop with staff and cook meals. One young person says "I can make lasagne and roast dinner now". Young people's dietary cultural needs are met, for example, the home, where necessary, provides appropriately prepared meat for young people in line with their religion. Young people benefit from home-cooked, well-balanced and nutritious meals, provided by staff working in the home. They are involved in choosing their own food and provided with an alternative if the main option is not the preferred choice. Young people are allowed in the kitchen to help themselves to drinks during the day.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health needs are identified and services provided to meet them. Files contain health information and details of the child's General Practitioner (GP) and staff support young people to access external health professionals, in line with their individual needs. Examples include, staff taking young people to counselling, hospital and their GP. Records of appointments with health professionals are clearly maintained ensuring the physical, emotional and mental health needs of young people are met.

Young people's health is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment. Medication is securely stored within the home and designated staff are trained to administer medication safely.

Clear records are maintained for the administration of medication and staff are vigilant in checking medication dispensed, ensuring accurate and up-to-date records are maintained. Files contain drug information, a photograph of the young person and signatures of staff qualified to dispense medication. However the home does not have an approved list of homely remedies for young people in the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirm that they feel safe and protected within the home. They can openly talk to their carers over their worries and concerns, and feel that the adults listen well and care about their welfare. The home has clear and well understood risk management strategies in place, which recognise the personal vulnerabilities of young people and provide suitable strategies to manage any associated risks. The staff group is proficient at recognising and managing risk taking behaviour, and consistently implement the agreed strategies to reduce risks to young people.

Young people are protected from bullying. Staff are vigilant with regard to relationships within the home and high supervision levels mean that there are limited opportunities for bullying or inappropriate relationships to develop. Young people discuss bullying with staff and any issues are addressed with individuals concerned.

Young people's privacy is respected and information is handled in a confidential manner. Young people's records are stored appropriately to protect their confidentiality and staff understand the importance of confidentiality.

Young people's privacy is respected when washing. Young people say they get enough privacy and use their bedrooms to have time away from the rest of the group when required.

Young people are assisted to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and an effective reward system. There is guidance in place for staff to adhere to when working with individual young people and restraints are rarely used.

Young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. There are no major hazards to compromise welfare; however the home's garden patio step is in need of minor repair to help prevent young people from tripping over. Fire safety checks are carried out at the required intervals although evacuation records do not evidence response times and the names of people involved in fire evacuation. All maintenance work and testing happens on a regular basis.

Staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding young people's welfare and staff are encouraged to keep their knowledge up-to-date by attending appropriate training. Staff are confident and clear about the action to take following any child protection incidents. This ensures that young people are protected from abuse. Child protection incidents at the home are dealt with appropriately and all professionals notified within appropriate timescales.

Young people's health and safety is protected by careful vetting of visitors to the home to prevent young people being exposed to potential abusers. No member of staff is allowed to work in the home until full checks are completed and records confirm all visitors' sign in and out of the building. Young people are also protected through systems that are in place that prevent absence without authority. This ensures their safety. There are systems in place to notify the appropriate authorities of any significant events and risk assessments completed for young people who are

at risk. The home works with local police to help keep young people and the community safe.

Leadership and management

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

The home is managed and organised well to keep young people safe and secure and staff have access to regular training programmes to help them meet the needs of young people accommodated, although staff are without the latest copy of the new 'Children's Homes National Minimum Standards', 'The Children's Homes Regulations' and latest inspection report from Ofsted. Therefore staff are not up to date with current outcomes that need to be met for young people accommodated.

Young people are guided through and know what services they can expect from the home, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to share with, and a clear statement of how the home operates is available for parents and others needing this information. The home's Statement of Purpose (SOP) covers most matters as outlined in Schedule 1 of The Children's Homes Regulations.

Young people receive care and support from trained and competent staff. For example, most staff in the home have completed the National Vocational Qualification in Caring for Children and Young People at level 3. The roles and responsibilities of staff are clear. They receive mandatory training which includes child protection, health and safety and first aid. Staff are sufficient in number and qualifications to meet the needs of the young people. The rotas and daily logs demonstrate there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty at all times. Young people receive individual support reflected in the high staffing levels. As a result young people benefit from good support to meet their individual needs.

The registered manager of the home has not started a recent annual quality assurance and monitoring system, although feedback from young people, placing social workers and parents is positive. Regulation 33 visits are completed regularly to help evaluate the service but records do not evidence how staff are to improve the service. This does not contribute to improved outcomes for young people.

Young people enjoy the stability of an efficiently run home with a stable staff team and experienced management.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.