

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Stella Henderson
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This privately run children's home provides care for up to four long-term placements for children.

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 **good**.

Young people make good progress at this home. They gain from the benefits of long-term stability, consistent boundaries and genuine warmth. This enables them to experience positive attachments and provides a sound basis for them to grow, achieve and develop.

Young people's needs are central to the running of the home. The relaxed family atmosphere is underpinned by highly professional working practices. Young people, their families and other professionals confirm that this is a safe place to live.

Management of the home is strong. Regular monitoring ensures that there is a good understanding of the strengths of the home and areas for development. This ensures young people continue to receive good quality care that is responsive to their changing needs.

One requirement and two recommendations are set to assist the provider in driving forward further improvement. Neither of these shortfalls impacts negatively on outcomes for young people.

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
34 (2001)	supply to the HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1). Ensure the system referred to in paragraph (1) shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34)(2)(3)	31/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support (NMS 1.3)
- improve the written development plan for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource. (NMS 15.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress living in this nurturing and supportive environment. As a result they enjoy positive attachments to staff and friendly respectful relationships with each other. Young people present as polite, courteous and able to socially engage with others. They feel that their lives have improved during their time at the home. One young person stated, 'It's lovely here. It feels like home.'

Young people enjoy good physical health. They are of an age where they take some responsibility for managing their own health needs. They do this successfully with the support of staff who ensure appointments are made and kept for routine check-ups and more specialist intervention where required.

Young people's emotional and psychological well-being is promoted through a general nurturing atmosphere in the home, supplemented by access to the organisation's own psychologist. Young people take pride in their appearance and achievements which reflects their positive self-view.

Young people are offered the opportunity to explore their life experiences and come to terms with these. This, along with clear structures and boundaries enable young people to get on with the rest of their lives. Consequently they are able to achieve

well in their education and commit to planning for the future.

Young people are ambitious for themselves and want good career opportunities. They want to do well and aim to study at university and college. School attendance is good and some young people are doing advanced studies. Those who have completed their compulsory education are motivated to structure their day in positive activities until they can begin college to further their learning and skills.

Young people recognise when they need additional practical help on their journey to independence, but say they are quite confident about looking after themselves. They demonstrate this by taking greater ownership for laundry, buying food, cooking individual and group meals and arranging their own budgets. Young people manage these budgets sensibly and save their money when they can. They take increasing responsibility for decision-making and are adept at representing their own interests where necessary.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a nurturing environment where they experience good relationships with each other and with staff. A calm atmosphere in the home helps to promote positive behaviours, and this means that there are very few sanctions and restraints. Young people say that the rules of the home are fair and reasonable, and they have successfully used the complaints system where they felt it necessary.

Young people's diverse needs are well-documented in their individual placement plans, and there is regular monitoring and review of their progress. Staff work in a co-ordinated and planned manner with young people's families, social workers and other services to meet young people's needs and secure positive outcomes.

Young people report that staff are good at supporting them with their education. Staff use their own educational knowledge and achievement to help young people with their school work, such as revision for biology and sociology.

Staff are attentive to the individual moods and disposition of young people and calibrate their responses accordingly. They are skilled at focussed key working and general day-to-day interaction with young people. This often results in some learning or insight for young people which helps them with their emotional and psychological development and progress.

A placing social worker noted: 'I feel that staff have a good understanding of the young person's needs (especially emotional vulnerabilities) and employ positive strategies to manage sometimes challenging behaviour.'

Young people are confident about expressing their opinions on all aspects of the running of the home and the plans being made for them. There are frequent opportunities for them to do so, and young people feel that staff listen to them and

take them seriously. These views are not always captured in recorded documentation in the home however. Although this has no immediate impact on young people, it means that some of their needs, or better ways of meeting their needs, may be overlooked.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

This is an area of strength. Young people are respected as the emerging young adults they are. Behaviour management is therefore focussed as far as possible on dialogue and negotiation. Young people know who to turn to if they have concerns or feel worried about things. They say they feel safe at the home and confirm that there is no bullying. They do not feel the need to run away but there are clear arrangements to secure their safe return home should this happen.

Young people are protected because staff have a good understanding of the risks young people may present in the home and in the community. These are clearly identified in young people's plans which help staff know what to do in response to any welfare or safeguarding concerns. Any concerns about young people's safety or well-being are always taken seriously and thoroughly investigated in collaboration with the relevant safeguarding agencies.

Young people live in a home that is free from any hazards to health and safety. Fire drills are undertaken and all equipment is regularly tested. Young people are further protected because the manager ensures that only those who are properly vetted are employed at the home to care for them.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living in a home where staff are clear about their role and responsibilities, and who understand what it is they are trying to achieve for young people. Staff are supported in this task by clear leadership from the manager, regular supervision, team meetings and relevant training.

The home works within its Statement of Purpose. The manager ensures that the home is a safe place for young people to live in, and she has a good grasp of the situations and individual needs of each young person. The manager and staff are good advocates on behalf of young people. A social worker commented that staff are, 'very good at communicating with me if there are any problems, incidents or concerns.'

The manager, with support from senior workers, robustly monitors the quality of care and young people's progress. Consequently, there are clear indicators to demonstrate young people's individual progress during their placements, such as

achievements at school and reductions in missing from home incidents.

Prompt action is taken to drive any improvements and enhance the care young people receive. A recommendation to compile a regulation 34 report has been met, but has not yet been received by Ofsted. The home's development plan is work in progress and does not reflect all aspects of the home's future plans. These are procedural shortfalls that require attention but which have no impact on young people's outcomes.

Young people's care records and other written documentation are of a good standard. They clearly outline young people's identified needs, how these needs are going to be met and young people's progress and development.

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.