

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	David Martin
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a local authority and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five children of either sex. Children and young people who use the home have special educational needs, physical disabilities and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties. Care is organised on a shared basis, with young people staying in the children's home for part of the week.

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**.

Outcomes for children in this home are good. They make good progress in their personal and social development and enjoy going to school. Children like to spend time in the home and have warm relationships with staff. Staff have created a nurturing environment in which children learn good social skills over time. Care plans are regularly evaluated, ensuring they reflect children's current needs. Children are closely supervised and helped to keep safe and out of harm's way. The staff team are dedicated and well-motivated and value the current leadership of the home. A new manager has been appointed and has made an application to be registered. The staff team are committed to the continuous improvement of the service and areas for development in the forthcoming year have been identified.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Children and young people enjoy warm relationships with staff. This enables them to develop positive social skills and a sense of belonging. Photographic summaries are used creatively to provide each child with a visual record of their progress. One parent said, 'The children are definitely loved and happy.'

The home and parents share responsibility for the health of individual children. Children's health care needs are met well and medical attention is sought promptly

when required. Medication is administered safely which protects children from harm.

Young people enjoy going to school and have excellent attendance. They have good opportunities to explore sensory equipment in the home and enjoy a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities. This creates a stimulating environment and gives children a chance to learn and discover at their own pace.

Children contribute to day-to-day decisions about their care and staff actively encourage them to make choices. House meetings are productive and staff act on children's views wherever possible. Staff make good use of keyworker sessions to help children express their views. Communication aids are tailored to children's individual needs ensuring that all have a voice.

Children live in the home on a shared-care basis and all, therefore, spend time with their parents. Staff strongly support parents and have good understanding of their personal circumstance. One parent commented that the staff are, 'Supportive to the whole family – their commitment is fantastic.' The home's approach ensures that children receive a continuity of service.

Children's care is well planned and is evaluated each month. This ensures that the home is able to adapt quickly to changes in children's needs and behaviour. Young people benefit from the flexible and thoughtful way in which their individual needs are met.

Quality of care

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

The staff are attentive, relaxed and good humoured in the way they relate to children. This has a positive impact on children's behaviour and actively creates a nurturing environment.

Staff encourage children to express their views through a variety of activities. This includes individual keyworker sessions and house meetings. Parents' views are also valued and the home is proactive in consulting them. One parent said they were 'really pleased with the home – they listen to our views.' The home ensures that children and their parents make a positive contribution to decision making.

The home has not received any complaints. Through one-to-one work, the staff have developed a good understanding of children's traits, preferences and routines. This enables them to resolve issues as they arise. Close liaison with parents ensures that their concerns are also resolved before they become problematic.

The home is successfully implementing redesigned placement plans. The new plans provide clear measures of progress and are evaluated and amended to ensure they accurately reflect the children's current needs. The plans provide an individualised account of the way in which the home supports each child. And, over time, will build up a clear picture of the progress children make.

The home is maintained in good order and provides a safe environment for children. The communal areas are comfortably furnished. Bedrooms reflect each child's personality, interests and preferences. There is a wide range of accessible play and sensory equipment. This standard of the environment contributes to children to sense of well-being when they stay at the home.

The staff work closely with parents to ensure that children attend school and are making the most of their opportunities to learn. They actively support parents in their own homes to get children to school when difficulties arise. The home contributes to school reviews and works closely with educational colleagues to ensure consistency in meeting children's needs. The home's approach ensures children enjoy participating in school.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children are looked after safely. One parent said, 'I can leave the home and I am completely calm and confident that they are safe.' Children said that they think that the staff are doing a good job in looking after them.

Children are comfortable with the adults who work with them and interact positively and warmly. There are individual risk assessments in place ensuring that children are closely supervised and effectively kept out of harm's way.

Staff have completed child protection and safeguarding training which was focused on the protection of children with learning disabilities. The training was well received by staff and provided them with a good opportunity to reflect on their own practice. The home responds promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding issues that arise. This protects children from harm.

The home has a strong track record in ensuring that children do not go missing from the home. This is attributable to good staffing levels which enable close supervision and one to one work. The home's approach helps to keep children safe.

Through good care planning the staff respond to children in a consistent way, ensuring that routines are maintained and that boundaries are applied firmly but fairly. This helps children modify their behaviour and develop good social skills. Positive behaviour is promoted effectively, without the need for sanctions. This contributes to children's sense of well-being.

Staff are robustly vetted before being offered employment and are subject to periodic checks to ensure they continue to be suitable adults to work with children. This contributes to children's safety. The home is safely maintained and routine checks of equipment and appliances are made. Children live in a safe environment.

Leadership and management

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

The home moved quickly to appoint a full-time, permanent manager following the departure of the previous Registered Manager. An application for the registration of the new manager has been made to Ofsted. The prompt appointment of the new manager has created a sense of stability in the staff team and has helped them to continue to provide good outcomes for children.

The Statement of Purpose is up to date. It sets out clearly the way in which the home is run and staffed, and complies with regulatory requirements. It informs children, parents and professional colleagues about the service they can expect, and enables them to hold the home to account if necessary. The home rarely receives complaints and has had none recently.

The home has a good track record of responding positively to inspection recommendations and requirements. The home has actively implemented monitoring processes that contribute to the identification of areas for development and improvement. This includes independent visits to the home on behalf of the provider. The annual improvement plan has set realistic and achievable targets for the forthcoming year. The home's approach ensures that it continues to support children well.

All staff have suitable child-care qualifications and have access to on-going training. This ensures that staff have a good understanding of children's needs and have opportunities to reflect on and update their practice. There are sufficient staff on duty to work on a one-to-one basis with children, fulfil their keywork responsibilities and keep children safe.

All records are held securely, keeping confidential information safe. Case records are well organised and reflect children's individuality. Placement plans are up to date and paint a clear picture of the progress children are making. Reviews are held within expected timescales. This ensures that placement plans are modified and adapted as children's needs change.

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.