

## Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC068803        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 12/07/2011      |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Angus Mackay    |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Full            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | Children's home |

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| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 26/01/2011 |
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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 can accommodate up to four children aged between 9 and 17 years. The home is one of several homes, belonging to a company. The home provides a service to children with a wide range of behavioural or educational needs, clearly explained in its Statement of Purpose. It will consider emergency admissions subject to an assessment of that child's needs and with consideration of those of the children in residence. All children attend either a local mainstream school or one of the company's three schools.

### Overall effectiveness

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

Children enjoy living in an excellently maintained and safe home. There is superb communication between staff and families and staff and children ensuring all are fully engaged in care planning. Children say they like the home, the activities and evidently like the staff and manager.

Children make excellent progress in attendance at school and in educational attainment. Social workers comment very positively on the tremendous support provided by care staff to aid in this educational progress.

Children receive care from very well trained, appropriately selected staff. They significantly reduce the incidence of going missing, violent behaviour and serious incidents and there is good practice in safeguarding them.

The acting manager provides exceptional leadership with a positive use of management information and detailed monitoring of the conduct of the home. This ensures that placement plans are of a high standard and that staff deliver good, consistent care producing positive outcomes for children. Following the inspection it is a requirement that his registration, with Ofsted, be completed.

### 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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| 7<br>(2001) | ensure any person who manages an establishment is registered; in particular ensure that the manager submits an application for registration to Ofsted. (Care Standards Act 2000 11(1)) | 30/09/2011 |
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## Outcomes for children and young people

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

Prior to coming to the home children had experienced significant disruption in their education. While in the home they make good progress with attendance at school. All children are currently attending either the home's own school or mainstream school. Staff make sure that they are properly prepared for school and that they are supported there where necessary. One social worker commented that she was 'struck at how well the home deals with incidents at the school as they happen'; saying the level of support is, 'over and above,' what she would expect. Where children are in the home's own school, efforts are made to prepare them to re-engage in mainstream education to improve their chances at social inclusion.

Staff encourage healthy lifestyles in the children and have excellent health resources to aid this. Meal times are pleasant experiences and the manager encourages staff to make them relaxed times where they provide high quality healthy food, children exercise choice and they meet cultural needs. The home runs a monthly health promotion to encourage healthy eating and children are very positive about this seeing it as a fun event that helps to improve their health. Staff use themed evenings to encourage knowledge about other cultures, including their food. Children choose what countries they are going to include and were enthusiastic about the evening, which they had just had.

Staff work closely with social workers to maintain, repair or encourage external contacts with families for children. Social workers comment on how excellent staff are at developing relationships with children's families and in including families in line with care planning agreements. They comment on how staff are excellent at supporting children in meetings to represent their wishes and to support them in future planning.

Children get involved in positive community based activities to aid their personal development. A social worker commented on how well the home were doing to address children's leisure needs and to engage them in a wide range of clubs and activities, which met these needs. Children say that they enjoy attending local clubs such as cricket and football training and that staff assist them in getting there and back.

Keyworkers assist children in exploring their background and in developing an understanding of their own and other cultures. For example, children explained what they had learnt about Brazilian culture to the inspector. Where social workers identify the need, children gain support and assistance from other professionals to aid them in addressing complex emotional or behavioural difficulties. Staff assist children in successfully engaging in these supports.

## Quality of care

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

Children and staff display warm, comfortable, relaxed and friendly relationships with each other. Children know how to make a complaint and believe that staff address them properly. They have access to external advocates and a range of independent visitors to enhance their safety. The manager has made substantial changes to the interior of the home to make it much more homely and less institutional in feel, which aids in creating the pleasant ambience. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, choosing the décor and furnishings, enhancing their sense of ownership. They were pleased to show off their bedrooms and all had very individual differences reflecting their personal choices. Staff respect children's privacy and children have keys to their own rooms to reinforce their sense of ownership and personal space.

Staff maintain excellent individual placement plans, which detail the historical pathway for the children, their current needs and actions to meet them. Staff identify all personal, cultural and religious needs of the children and how to meet them. Staff make excellent use of these files to ensure all children's needs are being met. The files give an accurate picture of the child, their presenting problems, potential triggers to behaviours and how to work with them.

Children know what staff expect from them and generally behave in line with behaviours agreed in their placement plans. Staff use positive reward systems to reinforce good behaviour but rely more on the quality of their relationships with the children to maintain these good behaviours. Staff say that the manager has encouraged them to be creative in the activities which they engage children in, relying less on paid activities. Children say that they enjoy the activities on offer and initially describe the no cost activities as the fun things. Staff allow the children to be children enjoying simple play such as bike rides, chase, walks to the 'haunted wood' and ball games in the garden. Children also described clubs they enjoy in the local community such as cricket, football training and St Johns Ambulance.

Each child has an exceptionally comprehensive and well-maintained health file. The company nurse checks all entries in the file to ensure accurate and safe practice. Staff ensure that the file contains all necessary information to allow children to access all health care to meet their needs. Staff review information each six months to create health action plans for the children which includes health targets and referrals as needed. These plans provide very clear information to the looked after children review process to aid the tracking of progress in health.

Staff use the excellently structured education plans to identify achievable targets for the children and work through these with them. For example all children attend school and are supported in this by staff. Social workers comment on how exceptional the work from the home is in maintaining children in school. Staff have high aspirations for children and encourage them to move into mainstream education to aid their social inclusion and educational outcomes. For example two children are being supported back into mainstream school.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Children say they feel safe in the home and like the staff and managers. They know who to turn to if they need support and know how to make complaints both internal and external to the home. They rarely go missing from the home with only one young person failing to return on one occasion in the last six months. Staff have a clear understanding of what actions to follow if a child goes missing and maintain regularly reviewed, individualised risk assessments on each child. Children clearly benefit from a well-structured safe environment. For example a social worker said that children '...feel safe there and benefit from the structure, they know what is expected of them and what to do.'

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding of children and demonstrate a clear understanding of what action to take if a child is at risk. They work exceptionally well with families and ensure that contacts which occur are in the best interests of the children and in line with their care plans. Social workers comment on how good the home is at keeping families informed about their children and at managing contacts to the benefit of the children. Children say that staff are fair in their interactions with them and that sanctions, when used, are also fair. Physical restraint is rare and the manager monitors the number of incidents, people involved and circumstances to seek further reduction. Staff said that the manager encourages the quality of their relationships to be the vehicle for control rather than physical intervention.

Staff recruitment procedures are outstanding and exceptionally thorough in checking and recording the suitability of candidates to working with children. Children are involved in the recruitment process to aid good and safe selection of staff. After their appointment staff are very well supported and procedures are in place to enable them to successfully and safely work with children.

Staff provide excellent support to children who have reported bullying, addressing it immediately to ensure their safety. They are very creative in how they address this and use both community and internal resources to aid in this process. For example bullying was reduced after a discussion about bullying between young people and the police community liaison officer. There have been no recent incidences of bullying and managers maintain high staffing ratios to enable close supervision of children at all times. Children displayed relaxed behaviour with each other, socialised positively throughout the inspection and said they were not experiencing bullying.

All staff are trained in fire prevention and fire drills are held when there is a new child or new member of staff to acquaint them with safe evacuation procedures. The managers ensure that fire drills are regular and include evacuation during the night to enhance children's safety. Staff ensure that children are appropriately protected by regular health and safety checks and exceptional care is taken to maintain a safe environment.

## **Leadership and management**

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

The Registered Manager moved to another home in the company and a new experienced manager has been in place since before the last inspection. However, the manager has not yet applied to Ofsted for registration.

The manager is providing excellent leadership to the staff who express confidence on his leadership; having overcome some initial reluctance to change established ways of working. He is providing regular supervision to staff, which gives staff clear guidance and support to aid their work with children and improves their ability to work with the complex problems of the children. Induction of staff is excellently organised ensuring a safe, structured and comprehensive introduction to working in the home. Staff training covers all key areas such as child protection, managing difficult behaviour including physical restraint, first aid and fire procedures and the company provide specialised extras if necessary to meet the needs of the children. One newly appointed member of staff said 'Support in the home is second to none. Induction was excellent and prepared me for the task of working in the home.' All new staff have completed Children's Workforce Development Council induction and the manager is aware that all staff must be qualified to a minimum of level 3 or be working towards the level 3 Children and Young People's Workforce Diploma within 6 months of appointment.

The manager informs the children, parents and local authorities of the aims and objectives of the home through the Statement of Purpose and the children's guide. The Statement of Purpose is a very comprehensive document, which provides clear information about the service and the home provides care in line with this. The children's guide is bright, user friendly, lays out expectations, rights, and aims clearly to aid children's ability to access key information. The manager has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection in a very comprehensive manner. The home are now using forms for recording and cross-referencing bullying and risk assessments which can also be cross-referenced to serious incidents, restraints and key-working improving monitoring, the effective interventions of staff and outcomes for children. Staff recording of restraints is thorough and provides detailed information about precursors to any intervention and the resolution of the incident. The improved recording and monitoring of incidents is providing a much more responsive service to children with detailed tracked interventions improving the reduction in restraints and bullying.

Managers make excellent use of the comprehensive and brutally honest monitoring through the Regulation 33 visitor's reports to improve the quality of the service. They respond to all recommendations from these and quality assurance visits in a timely manner but also use this and Regulation 34 monitoring to advise their development plan for the home. Significant improvements have resulted from this in making the home a warm, homely and welcoming environment. The manager is encouraging children to regard it as a home and their respect for the environment is evident from the seedling plants on the windowsill to the immaculately maintained décor. Health and safety checks are thorough and in line with national requirements.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.