

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Thomas Webber
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is one of several homes belonging to the organisation. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of four young people, who may have 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 **good**.

The home ensures that young people receive a quality service that meets their individual needs. Some aspects of care provision are outstanding.

The management of the home ensures that the range of monitoring activities undertaken continually improve outcomes for young people. Robust safeguarding practices promote the safety and welfare of young people. Staff support and promote young people to sustain their educational placements as well as to assist them to realise their ambitions.

Young people receive a good level of care and support from a committed staff team. As a result, young people continue to make significant progress in a warm and caring environment. However the practice in relation to young people being given limited unsupervised free time is somewhat restrictive. This does not provide young people with an appropriate balance between enabling them to make choices while keeping them safe.

The personalised care and support young people receive enables them to develop and gain a more positive view about themselves which further enhances their self-esteem. Young people feel safe living at the home and are very positive about the quality of care and services provided and their overall experience of living at the home.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- review the home's written policy on managing behaviour with a view to providing a better balance between enabling young people to make choices whilst keeping them safe, with particular reference to Volume 5 Children's Homes section 2.60 to 2.64. (NMS 3.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

The home makes every effort to ensure that young people continue to make good progress educationally, socially and emotionally. This is supported by clear and consistent practices in the home that results in positive outcomes for young people.

As with other homes within the organisation, the current practices established for the protection of young people in relation to being given limited unsupervised free time is somewhat restrictive. As a result these do not provide them with an appropriate balance between enabling them to make choices while keeping them safe.

The home ensures that young people are well supported and are progressing towards attaining their educational aspirations. Some young people maintain excellent attendance at school and state how proud they are of their achievements.

Appropriate and constructive contact is facilitated and maintained between young people and significant people in their lives in line with their individual placement plans. Staff are very committed to supporting young people to maintain and increase the level of agreed contact between them and their families to enable the contact to become a positive experience for all concerned. The home also ensures that the families and the respective placing authorities are kept informed of the progress and well-being of young people.

The setting ensures that young people are assisted to develop social and independent living skills that prepare them for a self-sufficient life. Young people involved in this programme spoke positively about the achievements gained. As with other homes within the organisation, comprehensive pathway plans are well established for this purpose.

Quality of care

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

Young people live in a home that promotes caring and supportive relationships

between themselves and the staff team. Staff carry out their duties in an understanding and professional manner that results in young people being relaxed in their environment. The views, feelings and wishes of young people are actively sought through a range of forums. These contribute to and influence the way the home is run. Young people spoke very positively about the care, services and support they receive and their overall experience of living at the home.

Young people understand how to complain and feel comfortable and are fully supported to raise any concerns or worries openly. The home has received two complaints since the last inspection relating to the alleged conduct of staff. These were suitably investigated and addressed. This demonstrates that the home listens to the concerns of young people and takes appropriate action.

Comprehensive placement plans and the continuity and consistency of care, ensure that young people receive individualised care. The home encourages young people to attend their statutory reviews and for them to have a voice in the delivery of their care and support. These provide staff with excellent guidance on how to effectively work with and to meet the day-to-day needs of young people. Young people are also provided with opportunities to consider alternative strategies to manage their negative feelings and frustrations in a more effective way.

The home ensures that young people have access to a variety of health care professionals, including specialist support, to meet their emotional and psychological needs. There are robust arrangements in place for the management of medicines that promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Young people enjoy a healthy, varied and nutritious diet and they are fully consulted in the menu planning process. Staff support young people to gain an appreciation of dishes from different cultures, including theme nights. The specific cultural and dietary needs of young people are also well catered for. Young people commented very positively about the quality and quantity of meals provided.

Young people attend various educational placements which are tailored to meet their individual needs. Good communication is maintained between the home and the various educational placements. This, together with the well-established boundaries and routines of the home and the excellent staff support, contribute to young people maintaining regular school attendance.

Young people are provided with every opportunity to maintain a healthy life-style by engaging in a range of purposeful leisure activities both within the home and in the wider community despite the home being in a rural setting. Young people commented positively about the opportunities available to them. The success gained in these pursuits helps them to develop a sense of achievement.

The home is maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and very comfortable. It is also well-furnished and in good decorative order. Young people, with the support of staff, take a great pride and responsibility in the maintenance of the home. The premises provide young people with excellent facilities to meet their

individual and collective needs.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding young people. Practices within the home also ensure that any safeguarding concerns are handled in a way that fully protects and supports young people. They also benefit from living in a structured environment which contributes to them feeling safe living in the home. This is further supported by the depth of the relationships established between the staff and young people. Young people rarely go missing from the home. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding and take effective action in the event of any incident where a young person goes missing. This contributes to their safe return at the earliest opportunity.

The home implements comprehensive behaviour strategies that result in young people making significant progress in the management of their behaviours. Young people are proud of the improvements they have made in this area. Staff are appropriately trained in diffusing and managing challenging behaviour. The use of sanctions and restraints are also kept to a minimum with all methods of control being comprehensively recorded and monitored. Robust anti-bullying practices are well established. Young people commented that bullying is not an area of concern and that staff take prompt and appropriate action to deal with any incidents.

The home has rigorous staff recruitment and vetting procedures that ensure young people are effectively safeguarded.

Young people live in an environment which is kept physically safe and appropriately secure to ensure that young people and staff are appropriately safeguarded. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various health and fire safety records are accurate and up to date.

Leadership and management

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

Young people enjoy and benefit from living in a home which is very well managed. The two recommendations made at the previous inspection relating to contact access to significant people and providing copies of monitoring reports compiled by the manager to Ofsted have been fully addressed.

The Registered Manager is suitably experienced and qualified and demonstrates strong and effective leadership. She also ensures that comprehensive and evaluative reports are completed as part of the internal monitoring of the overall quality of care provided to young people. These processes ensure young people receive consistency and stability of care.

The working practices and performance of staff are appropriately monitored through the processes of regular staff meetings; supervision and annual appraisals. Staff have access to a range of policies and procedures which underpin their practice. These together with excellent staffing levels ensure that the individual and collective needs of young people are appropriately met. Staff expressed confidence and appreciation in the leadership of the manager. They work well as a team and are also very appreciative of the support provided to each other. Young people also benefit from living in a home where they are cared for by a stable staff team.

The organisation ensures that staff are appropriately trained. They are provided with excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge, expertise and competence through attending a wide range of training. Staff spoke extremely positively about the range of training opportunities available to them.

The home meets its aims and objectives as detailed in its comprehensive Statement of Purpose. The young people's guide is produced in an appropriate format that provides young people with key information about the home.

The organisation has robust systems in place to monitor the delivery of care and services provided to young people. Any weaknesses identified are promptly addressed.

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.