

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Guy Mammatt
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is run by the local authority. The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 10 young people either sex with emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The purpose-built house is situated on the site of a local authority special school and has access to some of the school's facilities.

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 care practice at the home is highly personalised and tailored to the individual needs of the young people. The home provides a very good quality of care with outstanding outcomes for all the young people. Young people benefit because the staff team are very conscientious and they all work consistently to help the young people achieve their potential.

Leadership and management arrangements are strong. They have addressed the issues raised at the last inspection and have gone from strength to strength to meet the needs of the young people. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of safe working practice and manage unsafe situations within the home very efficiently.

Young people are safe at the home. They benefit from living there and have a good relationship with the staff team. Young people are constantly stimulated to try new ideas that broaden their experiences and develop self-confidence. It is evident that all young people living at the home have grown physically and matured since their time of placement. Young people are healthy and have developed social interaction skills that were once thought may be beyond their capabilities.

Shortfalls exist in the record keeping of restraints as some of the recording attached to the bound log book could potentially be lost. As well the home does not always keep well-ordered records of the staff vetting and clearance details to ensure it can

demonstrate that all the all staff working at the home have undergone the necessary employment checks. Both these shortfalls do not presently impact negatively on the welfare and safety of the young people living at the home.

This is a progressive hard working home that is constantly critically evaluating itself. Detailed action plans are used to advance the service and promote improvements in the care provided to 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
17B (2001)	ensure the registered person shall prepare and implement a written policy (in this regulation referred to as the behaviour management policy) which sets out the measure of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the children's home; with particular reference to keeping all records of restraint in a bound log book.(Regulation 17B (1 (a)))	18/07/2013

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's home has a record of the recruitment and vetting checks which have been carried out on those working (including as volunteers) for the children's home which includes all the matters listed. NMS 16.3 (a)-(f))

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

All young people display settled behaviour at the home and have developed a positive self-view about their situation. Most young people have developed an ability to form and sustain attachments. Young people display sufficient emotional well-being that will enable some to move onto foster placements and others into adult care.

All young people have excellent relationships with their families. Frequent family contact takes place at the home and also on visits into the community. The family

relationships for all young people have greatly improved since they started their placement. As a result of this young people spend valuable time with the people that are important to them. This helps them remain in touch with their history and supports them in their daily life.

All young people have excellent educational attendance. Young people that were being educated in isolation have begun integration back into larger classes. Young people make friends at school and achieve well for their own individual capabilities. Consequently young people receive good opportunities for social interaction and educational achievement.

Young people are in very good health and clearly benefit from the nurturing care in place at the home. Young people are developing as appropriate to their age and have all their health needs met.

Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviour at the home. All incidents of challenging behaviour have greatly decreased. Young people radiate contentment and display that they are very happy with their surroundings.

Young people take part in activities within the community and have friends visit them at the home to play with. As a result they receive good opportunities to develop friendships within their own peer group and take part in all the activities that children and young people should be able to.

Quality of care

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

Staff and young people enjoy positive relationships. Staff are calm with the young people and exhibit a nurturing nature. This enables the young people to thrive in their care. Staff follow comprehensive guidance as a result of which they provide effective support and display an excellent understanding of the young people's needs. Parents and young people feel that staff are consistently concerned with the young people's welfare.

There are no formal complaints raised against the service. Staff ensure that they are familiar with the communication signs of the young people which enables them to understand if they are distressed. The on-going, careful observation and monitoring of known behaviour ensures that staff quickly identify when the young people are unhappy. Therefore young people always receive a prompt resolution to something that is causing them concern.

Formal consultation with young people is limited due to their communication abilities. Staff engage young people in variety of non-verbal communication methods. This ensures that the young people always know their plans and it also offers them an opportunity for their views to be obtained.

Comprehensive care plans are in place that are tailored to the individual child. Care

plans are written collaboratively and shared with all the parties involved in the care of the young people. Regular key worker meetings and core group meetings take place which ensures that all professionals involved in the care of the young people work consistently. The holistic approach enables young people to fulfil their potential and regularly achieve their set targets.

Staff use effective positive behaviour strategies and support young people in developing their skills in managing conflict and developing relationships. As a result of this, young people now frequently positively interact together in social situations and manage their own needs to withdraw when they feel necessary.

A good range of purposeful and enjoyable activities are available to young people. Young people participate in a large selection of sensory involvement which calm their senses and broaden their experiences. Young people have access to a large play park at the home which provides a great deal of exercise and fun. They also enjoy activities in the community; for example, horse riding and going out for meals in pubs.

Young people live a healthy environment. They are registered with the essential medical practitioners and they receive specialist health care when it is required. The processes in place for storing and administering medication are robust. Food prepared for the young people is nutritious and sufficiently varied to encourage the young people to incorporate new tastes into their diet.

Staff positively address any barriers to education attendance and actively promote the education of young people at school. Staff effectively support the young people during the transition times of the day and participate in a handover with education staff. As a result young people engage with their school placement and staff successfully support their attendance.

The service is well-resourced and sufficiently maintained. Although the home will always struggle to provide a true homely environment, because of its layout and design, recent changes to the internal door systems have had a positive effective on the feel of the home. Young people and staff benefit from the relaxed open door situation that is now in place throughout the inside of the home. This has promoted positive interaction between the young people and decreased the anxiety around young people mixing together.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Excellent positive support plans clearly identify the risks and protective factors for individual young people. They detail the known triggers and general strategies that are in place and which guide appropriate, effective and consistent support for the young people. Staff demonstrate an improved understanding of young people's behaviour and how to effectively manage it. This has reduced the risk to the young people as well as provided opportunities for them to learn and mature.

Young people are not at risk of bullying within the home. People who know them well feel confident that the young people are safe at the home. There are no incidents of young people going missing and serious challenging behavioural incidents at the home are infrequent.

Positive and proactive behaviour management strategies are applied. The management of incidents by staff has greatly improved which has led to more incidents being effectively de-escalated without the use of restraint. There is now minimal use of restraint; it is used within the correct circumstances and is effectively monitored by the house manager. This ensures that young people's rights are upheld and they are kept safe at all times.

A good up-to-date behaviour management policy is in place which states that all records of restraint should be recorded in a bound log book. Currently some records of restraint are on loose leaf paper and attached to the log book. This can lead to inaccurate records being kept either through information going missing or being added to a later date.

The home does not use negative sanctions as this is against the ethos of the home and also beyond the general comprehension of most the young people. Likewise long term rewards are not often used as young people have limited recognition of rewards for achievement over lengthy periods of time. Staff successfully use positive motivators in the present to encourage young people to complete tasks and keep them on-track.

The home is physically safe and appropriately secured to the outside given the needs and characteristics of the young people. All the environmental and safety checks are carried out within the appropriate timescales. Fire safety procedures are satisfactory with clear personal evacuation plans in place for each young person. This means that young people live in a well-managed and as far as possible safe environment.

All staff working at the home are carefully selected and vetted to ensure unsuitable individuals do not have access to working with children; however, insufficient detail is held at the home. This means that the home does not have an up to date record of the recruitment and vetting checks that have taken place for all staff. Consequently the home cannot verify that in all cases the checks are complete.

Leadership and management

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

Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the home is effectively and efficiently managed in the absence of the Registered Manager. Strong leadership throughout the staffing structure enables the service to identify any shortfalls and make improvements. The home is constantly progressing forward its care practices to ensure that it always meet the changing needs of the young people.

The home has comprehensively addressed all the requirements raised at the last inspection. The home now has a new behaviour management policy in place for the service and for all the young people; the home no longer restricts the liberty of young people while managing volatile incidents and the home now always uses restraint in line with the legal parameters set within the Children's Homes Regulations 2011; therefore ensuring that all young people are kept safe and are no longer exposed to unreasonable acts to manage their behaviour.

The home also now includes consultation with parents and placing authorities in the monthly monitoring. Therefore all parties that are involved with the service have the opportunity to give their points of view on the quality of care provided. The management effectively demonstrates that any actions points received from parental feedback are well-detailed and efficiently followed through.

Staff feel valued and included in the operational direction of the home. Levels of delegation and responsibility throughout the team are good and all staff respond positively to the high expectations of the service. Staff receive good levels of supervision and their training needs are sufficiently met. This ensures that staff are constantly engaged and well supported to fulfil their role to the best of their ability.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is in place that is updated regularly with the input of the entire team. The home effectively demonstrates that it meets the stated aim that 'children deserve to be loved, cared for, developed and offered opportunities to achieve their maximum potential in life'.

A high quality development plan is in place. It is specific to the home and relevant to current issues. The home has numerous excellent action plans in place to ensure that the management and team remain focussed on the important issues identified in the development plan. The management is constantly looking for ways to improve the home for young people and ensure the care is always person centred.

An independent visitor conducts monthly visits and provides reports to the home. These include observations with young people and discussions with staff and placing authority representatives. This ensures the visitor obtains a rounded view of the service and provides an important independent oversight for the home manager. The management of the home also carries out regular monitoring of the home. This includes an evaluation of staff feedback surveys to ensure all staff comments are valued and incorporated into the running of the home.

The management team monitors the progress that young people make; the outcomes they achieve and can demonstrate the difference that the home has made.

The home has strong working links with outside agencies including Ofsted. It ensures that all significant events relating to the protection of children are notified to the appropriate parties. This ensures that good safeguarding practice is adhered to and effective communication lines are in place for all parties.

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.