

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is run by the local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with 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**.

This is a good service where young people make good progress from the point of moving in. There is individualised support that helps young people develop trusting relationships with staff. A young person said 'The staff are all really nice.' Young people make good progress in terms of improved health and emotional well-being. A social worker said 'They promote positive behaviour and improved self esteem'. All young people attend fulltime education that is meeting their individual needs. There is an open and honest culture in the home and young people's views influence decision making. There has been some risk taking behaviour by young people recently that has compromised their safety. A child protection incident has also impacted on young people's welfare. However, the vigorous safeguarding approach to these incidents by management has ensured that young people are protected from harm, have their safety promoted and do feel safe. Young people know staff members are consistently concerned about their welfare. There is a strong, stable and committed staff team. A supportive culture exists amongst staff and management resulting in a high level of consistency in the delivery of care for young people. There is a forward-looking approach to continually providing high standards of care.

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress and outcomes for them continue to be good over a period of time.

They receive highly individualised support and this helps them to enjoy trusting relationships with staff members. Young people are in fulltime education that is meeting their individual needs. They are making good progress from their starting points. For example, one young person is expected to achieve GCSE's this year when last year they struggled to stay in the classroom. Young people's health and emotional well-being is continually improving and they are becoming confident and developing self-esteem. A social worker said 'He has really started to take care of his appearance now'. Young people are learning to take risks appropriate to their ages and are well prepared for adulthood. Young people's views are central to how the home operates. They confirm that they are fully involved in making decision about things that matter to them such as new residents, activities and their diet. Young people learn to manage their behaviour positively and reduce risk taking behaviour. Incidents of young people going missing are greatly reduced. Social workers report good progress in young people. One said that a young person had made excellent progress in the home which was 'Achieved through nurturing and good boundary setting.' The inclusive approach to young people's care means that all have good access to a wide range of stimulating activities that are appropriate to their age and needs. This results in young people gaining new skills and interests. Young people are settled and enjoy strong relationships with staff members. Young people enjoy being in the home and feel safe. They say there are 'Good staff that give you loads of support when you need it', and, 'The staff are nice and there are brilliant activities.'

Quality of care

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

The quality of care in this home is good. Strong relationships are shared between staff members and young people. This results in young people feeling secure and knowing that staff are consistently concerned about their welfare. A staff member said 'We never use agency workers, we are very proud of this, consistency is vital for our young people.' There are clear strategies in place to protect young people such as individual support plans and intense direct work with young people. Young people's views influence decision making. Respecting their views is part of the culture in this home. There are many opportunities for talking and being listening to. Staff treat young people's views as important and ensure that young people have access to advocacy. Lessons are learnt from complaints made by young people and this promotes their welfare. Managers say 'Learning from complaints is achieved in team meeting and supervision for all staff.' There are robust systems for individualised care planning which ensures that all staff are clear and confident about young people's care. Care plans take into account young people's backgrounds and this ensure that cultural needs are understood and met. A social worker said staff 'Promote positive behaviour and improved self-esteem in the young people through thinking in terms of positives, providing incentives and rewarding.' Another social worker said that a young person 'Can now talk to staff about their needs as opposed to acting them out.' There is proactive working with other agencies to address young people's individual needs. Barriers to education are removed through effective joint working with schools. Young people's health is improving due to input from services

such as the Child and Adult Mental Health Service and the sexual health services. Gender issues are sensitively addressed and staff help young people to understand their sexuality as they approach adulthood. The safety and well-being of young people is enhanced by joint working with the police. Young people benefit from living in a homely and safe environment and this helps them to feel a sense of belonging to the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe and are safe. They say they can easily identify adults to talk to if they feel unsafe. A staff member said 'Young people here know what to expect of us, they do feel safe.' Care plans clearly identify risks and protective factors. They help staff to recognise young people's vulnerabilities. This supports staff to follow positive behaviour management strategies which promote young people's welfare. There is good monitoring and review of care plans which ensures that they remain relevant for keeping young people safe. There have been some incidents of young people going missing which has compromised their safety, however, the home has been successful in helping to reduce these incidents. This has been achieved through staff building close effective relationships with young people, working on attachment issues, providing alternatives to going missing and setting up revised contact arrangements involving social workers. Staff are proactive in minimising the involvement of young people in the criminal justice system. This has been achieved by helping young people understand the consequences of their actions. There is minimal use of restraint in this home. One incident however has led to child protection procedures being instigated. The vigorous response to this incident from management has ensured that young people are safe and have their well-being promoted. Staff members understand child protection policies and procedures and feel confident in dealing with concerns. There is a robust response to bullying in the home. A recent bullying survey carried out brought about increased staffing levels and a change in shift planning. As a result young people feel better protected and safe. Young people live in a home which promotes their physical safety. There are environmental risk assessments and checks on the fire safety equipment to promote safety. Young people know how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire. One young person said 'We do fire drills so we know what to do if there is a fire.'

Leadership and management

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

There is good leadership and management in this home. The registered manager is experienced and competent and leads a strong, stable and committed staff team. Staff have a wide range of skills, which they use to provide opportunities for young people to extend their experiences, develop new skills and acquire knowledge which will be of value in their adult life. Staff are well trained and receive strong support through supervision and appraisal. Staff say there is a supportive culture which results in a high level of consistency in their delivery of care for young people. A

stakeholder said 'There is a learning culture within the home. Staff learn through attending appropriate training courses, completing e-learning courses, and attending team meetings. Management liaise with the training team to ensure that the training provided is appropriate for staff to be able to meet the children's needs.' A staff member said 'There is lots of training here which is relevant to our work. There's always something. Training is encouraged by management.' Management continues to implement new initiatives to improve the high quality standards of care to enable young people to achieve significant outcomes. There is a forward-looking approach to continually providing good standards of care. Staff and management keep up to date with new practice developments to make improvements. Rigorous and robust monthly monitoring takes place through a comprehensive quality assurance system. This includes consultation with young people and an evaluative approach to regulation 33 monitoring. This ensures that young people have their welfare promoted and protected. There is high quality record keeping which promotes a professional and consistent response to young people's care.

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.