

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Elaine Cray
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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

This home is part of a large private children's care organisation and is registered to accommodate three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home offers short, long-term and emergency placements. The home has a school on site, and this is registered with the Department for Education.

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people are given excellent opportunities to develop and progress while staying at this service. Their behaviour, health, education, social and safeguarding needs are effectively supported and significantly improved. Clear boundaries, meaningful relationships and in-depth understanding of each child or young person's individuality lead to excellent outcomes for children and young people.

Promoting equality and diversity is an outstanding feature of this service. Children and young people flourish and thrive. Care plans are proactively developed and staff ensure their practice connects with the children and young people's needs. Children and young people are treated with a high level of respect, and clear efforts are made to ensure their individual needs, wishes, feelings and views are heard and included in the running of the service.

Children and young people do well and improve in education. They are consistently rewarded for their own individual achievements and development. They feel good about their progress, grow in confidence and feel safe. Children and young people develop meaningful and rewarding relationships with families, peers and other adults. They are provided with care that enables them to develop emotional maturity and resilience in preparation for their transition to adult life.

The service is effectively and efficiently managed. Systems and processes are established. Staff are well trained and motivated to ensure the welfare of children and young people is central to the running of the home. There are strong and organised communication processes, including excellent interagency liaison. The dedicated, energetic and forward-looking management team provides continuous quality assurance to maintain excellent standards and further develop improvements in the running of the service.

There are no statutory requirements or recommendations set as a result of this inspection.

Areas for improvement

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Children and young people make substantial progress in this service. They thrive, learn and develop due to a consistent behaviour management framework and meaningful relationships with staff. Children and young people grow in self-confidence, develop meaningful social relationships and make good progress educationally. They say they receive excellent support with attending and doing well at school. Children and young people learn to feel good about themselves because staff show how extremely proud they are of the children and young people's efforts, achievements and improvements. Children and young people particularly enjoy and value their positive and meaningful relationships with staff.

Children and young people thrive because they are treated with respect and enabled to channel their individuality, skills and abilities into achievement and different opportunities. They develop resilience and are more tolerant of others because there is a clear assessment and celebration of each child or young person's needs and individuality. Children and young people are given excellent and meaningful opportunities to make sense of their backgrounds, experiences and their behaviours. They are encouraged to express themselves in terms of sexuality, gender and culture, and religious allegiances are understood and facilitated. Children and young people are cared for in an environment that proactively identifies, develops and celebrates difference.

Children and young people can express their views, feelings and wishes because they are given time to talk to their key workers, care staff, managers and teachers. They are encouraged to develop social networks, including being able to bring friends back to the house. Children and young people's perspectives are valued and listened to. Children and young people feel valued because they are involved in the running of the house. Their own individual ideas and discussions in house meetings have resulted in deciding the regularity of the house meetings, changing days for paying pocket money, swapping take-away meals for an eating-out activity and how the house is decorated and furnished.

Children and young people are safely and proactively enabled to try different opportunities and develop new skills. They feel good about themselves as they are consistently congratulated and rewarded for their achievements. Young people grow in maturity because they enjoy personal responsibility, including looking after their own pets, organising their own free time, cooking and helping around the house. They also have opportunities to develop independence skills. They confidently carry out domestic tasks, learn how to budget money and develop good social skills. Older young people are confidently looking forward to obtaining good qualifications and preparing to study, work and live independently when they leave the home.

Children and young people enjoy good and significantly improved health because they are encouraged to understand and be proactive about their own medical and

health needs. Their medical needs are excellently met because staff help organise appointments and help young people to develop confidence to attend. Children and young people understand how their own lifestyles impact on their health. They develop greater health awareness because they are encouraged to explore and engage in meaningful discussion and education about topics that are of interest to them. Children and young people have developed awareness about sexual health, the impact of alcohol, healthy eating, exercise and improving personal and dental hygiene.

Quality of care

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

Children and young people are looked after by a competent and well-trained staff team. Children and young people are supported with a structured and effective framework for care, education and behaviour management. They feel cared for and thrive because staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs and circumstances of each child and young person.

Children and young people progress because care and behaviour management packages are individually tailored. Staff take great care to ensure their relationships with children and young people are engaging, meaningful and respectful. These relationships are a key strength to the excellent outcomes for children and young people. They are inspired to do well. Staff are skilled and enthusiastic in encouraging them to explore opportunities to develop self-confidence and achieve their full potential.

There is a proactive commitment to promoting diversity and equality. Staff have comprehensive knowledge about the individuality, including social, cultural and economic backgrounds, of children and young people. Staff provide an environment where children and young people can express themselves and also explore and develop their awareness of diversity, tolerance and equality.

Care and education planning, risk management procedures and behaviour management plans are comprehensive and give clarity to how staff are to support children and young people. There are individual placement plans which set achievable targets and challenges. All care and education documentation support children and young people's emotional, behavioural and learning processes and enable them to progress and aspire to their potential. There is excellent assessment and review of plans, and children and young people are a key part of the review process. Staff are kept consistently updated so plans are contemporary, relevant and have positive impact on the needs of the children and young people. The assessment and review of each child or young person's placement contributes to the overall excellent level of care provided. Regularly reviewed records and discussions show how children and young people make clear progress while living at the home.

Arrangements to meet the health and medical needs of children and young people are excellently managed. Health care plans are comprehensive. Staff are resourceful,

imaginative and very proactive in how they encourage children and young people to seek relevant and required medical support. Health plans are effectively implemented, closely monitored and provide excellent support to children and young people. Children and young people's health is promoted and protected with safe and effective procedures for the storage and administration of medication. Healthy eating is encouraged and menus are balanced, taking into account personal preferences and promoting a multicultural perspective. Children and young people are provided with a variety of activities that encourage physical exercise.

Staff's knowledge about the individual profile of each child or young person is key to managing and improving behaviour and motivating children and young people to achieve. There are clear structures and expectations for all children and young people. Staff are good at making daily routines meaningful for children and young people because they have good knowledge of how children or young people's previous challenges and experiences have impacted on and influenced presenting needs and behaviours.

Communication processes are strong and effective. The close working relationship among the care and education staff facilitates children and young people's placements. Staff also liaise with external agencies in accordance with children and young people's care plans to access additional support and opportunities for children and young people.

House meetings and regular key working contact are integral to including children and young people's views and wishes in the running of the home and their placement plans. Information about how to complain is displayed, can be accessed via the children and young people's guide and is discussed in house meetings. Information includes details about the external agencies children and young people may wish to contact for advice or with complaints.

Children and young people live in a well-maintained house, providing a homely environment to meet their needs. The standard of décor and furnishings throughout the home is high, and staff make clear efforts to make the house comfortable and homely. There are good levels of privacy for children and young people; they can have their own bedroom key, and there are privacy locks for bathrooms. Children and young people's bedrooms are personalised and reflect their preferences and individual expression.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people live in a safe, secure and stable environment. Levels of safety are effective because the robust and regularly reviewed policies and procedures are implemented by well trained and competent staff. Strategies to safeguard children and young people are clear and structured. The children and young people understand the importance of promoting their own safety, and benefit

from significant improvements in their behaviour. They say they feel safe and looked after because staff look out for their welfare. Children and young people enjoy good relationships with staff, and while there are no concerns about bullying, they are confident that staff will listen to any concerns.

All staff are aware of their own roles and responsibilities and other agencies involved in keeping children and young people safe. The manager and staff maintain effective links with the local safeguarding team and the police. Staff are fully aware of the procedures regarding children and young people going missing from the home. Written joint protocols with the police are detailed and practically implemented with individual procedures included in each placement care plan.

Safety is paramount, and attention to the supervision of children and young people is detailed and consistent. Safeguarding strategies focus on robust yet proactive risk assessment. Strategies to manage behaviours and safeguard children and young people focus on safety but also ensure they all have opportunities to develop, reach their potential and achieve.

Staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all children and young people are supervised, kept safe and receive appropriate support. Children and young people are encouraged and supported by an energetic, resourceful and creative staff team. Behaviour improves because children and young people are enabled to positively channel their free time and are kept occupied with activities. They quickly develop patterns of making positive choices and leading safer and more fulfilling lifestyles. Positive behaviour is quickly and swiftly reinforced, and children and young people value the praise and rewards they receive from staff.

Rules and expectations are clear as they are documented, discussed in key working and promoted in individual behaviour management plans. Staff have an in-depth understanding of children and young people's backgrounds and are extremely versatile in how they manage difficult behaviour. Children and young people understand what constitutes good behaviour, what rewards are available and what behaviour is not acceptable. Records and comments from children and young people show the sanctions used when things do not go so well for children and young people are fair. Staff are trained in behaviour management, including physical intervention, and maintain good and accountable records.

Children and young people are protected by an effective and stringent recruitment process that includes a comprehensive check on all staff applying to work at this setting. Personnel records are maintained to a good standard. Visitors are checked, vetted and monitored.

Children and young people live in a safe environment. Health and safety are well managed. Safety and servicing checks are carried out as required. Fire safety training of staff, regular checks to the fire systems and fire drills ensure children, young people and staff know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

This service has addressed the statutory requirement from the last inspection and has continued to improve the quality of care to children and young people. There is a strong and proactive ethos for improvement, both in terms of staff development, the efficient running of the service and most significantly for the outcomes for children and young people.

This service excels in providing children and young people with a stable, safe and nurturing environment. There are clear policies and procedures which are implemented by an energetic, versatile and proactive staff team. Staffing levels are good and are managed in keeping with the service's Statement of Purpose. Management systems are established and robust. Records are clear and accountable.

All members of staff spoken with gave very positive comments about the management team, their own professional support and staff team communication. Staff receive an excellent induction which includes a mentoring scheme. Staff value regular training. They say they are personally supported, and professionally challenged and developed with regular supervision.

There is strong leadership and staff are supported to provide consistent boundaries with a balanced and consistent focus on reward. There is an unquestionable celebration of individuality and a dedicated emphasis on maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, children and young people. This dynamic leadership promotes an energetic and child-centred service.

Internal and external monitoring of the service identifies good practice, shortfalls and further areas for development. There is a clear commitment, energy and motivation to provide and continuously improve a care framework that enables children and young people to achieve their full potential.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.