

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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 was registered in September 2008 and is part of the provision operated by the local authority. The home provides care for up to two young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good home that provides personalised, well planned care, taking full account of the individual needs of each young person. The individual needs of each young person fully promote positive outcomes through well planned and streamlined systems. The views of young people influence the quality of care they receive through effective and efficient communication.

The home is effective in delivering a good quality of care due to the strong relationships they have with young people. Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and know what future plans they have. The home is staffed with a skilled and knowledgeable work force that demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices to meet individual young people's needs. The safety of young people is paramount and staff are highly effective in all aspects of safeguarding. Young people are safe and say they feel safe. Staff promote safeguarding with a dedication and passion that maximises young people's safety.

There are some shortfalls in record keeping and development plans.

Areas for improvementStatutory 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
28 (2001)	the registered person shall maintain in respect of each child who is accommodated in a children's home a record in permanent form which is kept up to date, this is in relation to diet monitoring records (Regulation 28(1)(b))	30/08/2011
29 (2001)	the registered person shall maintain in the children's home the records specified in Schedule 4 and ensure that they are kept up to date, in relation to a record of all visitors to the home and including the names of visitors and the reason for the visit.	30/08/2011

	(Regulation 29(1))	
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Recommendations

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

- ensure the registered person has a written development plan, reviewed annually, for the future of the home, either identifying any planned changes in the operation or resources of the service, or confirming the continuation of the home's current operation and resource (NMS 15.2)
- ensure a written or electronic record is kept by the home detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress from their starting point. They thrive through encouragement and praise that assists the development of their self-esteem and confidence. Young people achieve positive outcomes despite some of the barriers they face. This is a result of feeling safe and valued. They have developed a good understanding of their background and this means their emotional resilience is enhanced.

Young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and take responsibility for their own health. They re-evaluate their lifestyles and make choices to improve them, for example, giving up smoking and attending sexual health checks. This improves their health and well-being. Young people benefit from regular exercise and assessment of their diet, this means they are continually aware of improvements made to their weight and can make improvements where there are shortfalls. However, some monitoring records do not have enough detail in them and it is difficult to monitor patterns and trends. As a result young people's health may be compromised.

Young people have achieved positive results through attendance at school and made good progress. They are encouraged to participate in both attainment and achievement. Where young people have changed their education provision dramatic improvements in attendances have been made. As a result they have received awards and certificates through an awards ceremony. Young people who are no longer in the education system make progress in expanding their career options through undertaking placement assessments for further education.

Young people benefit from opportunities to develop their life skills to prepare them for leaving care and adult life. They undertake chores in the home, for example, managing money, planning, preparing and cooking meals and caring for a vegetable plot. This means young people are actively and positively involved in the home and community. As a result young people are skilled and confident in their own abilities which is achieved at their own pace of understanding and learning.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them. They are supported and encouraged by staff to maintain healthy relationships and they can meet at the home and other locations convenient for the contact. Some relationships young people are involved in have significantly improved their social interaction and confidence.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive a good quality of care as a result of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Staff and young people are relaxed in each others company, they have a mutual respect that is bred from the clear value and ethos of the home. The needs of each individual are met by proactive and committed staff. The staff work hard to encourage positive relationships between peers in the home and provide a calm and tranquil environment. Staff recognise and act accordingly where relationships are strained. They have improved the quality of relationships by seeking support and guidance from external partners. As a result underlying issues are addressed and bonds between young people and staff are strengthened and negative behaviour is reduced.

Young people feel that their views, wishes and feelings are actively sought and that they influence the running of the home. For example, young people chose the wallpaper for the lounge following a house meeting. Regular consultation assists young people to promote the quality of care they want to receive. Staff support young people to access independent advice through the National Youth Advisory Service to promote their wishes. This means staff are constantly striving to deliver care to a high standard.

The home provides individualised care tailored to the needs of each young person reflective of their placement plan. Young people are encouraged to be involved in planning their care and are supported through regular discussion at one-to-one meetings. The home engages with health practitioners to ensure the health needs of young people are fully met. Young people participate in caring for their health as a result of the home's newsletter and a fitness challenge set up by staff.

Staff are fully committed to support young people in their education. They encourage, praise and believe in the capabilities of young people. Staff ensure that shortfalls in attainment are addressed. As a result attendance levels are raised and achievement is gained. Young people are provided with opportunities to attend activities outside the school curriculum to enhance their development and social

skills. They make their own choices in regards to activities and have recently benefitted from a summer camp activity.

There are clear systems in place to identify young people's needs in relation to culture, identity, ethnicity, faith, gender, language, religious belief and sexual orientation. Staff are highly motivated and proactive in addressing any issues that arise. This is promoted in a sensitive way that enables young people to reflect and engage in their own behaviour that may be offensive to others. As a result young people develop an understanding of equality and diversity.

The home has a clear complaints system. Complaints received are handled effectively and efficiently. Young people understand how to make a complaint. There is clear guidance and support to help young people make complaints. The system is robust and aids a quick response from receiving the complaint to addressing it and feeding back through letter and verbal discussion. Complaints are resolved in a timely manner and documented accordingly.

The home is appropriately located, designed and maintained. Young people benefit from a homely environment reflective of their own personalities and taste. All young people have keys to their own bedrooms which promotes their privacy and personal space. The garden is large and spacious and young people benefit from the vegetable plot they have produced.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are protected from harm by a team of staff who are skilled and trained in safeguarding. They make safeguarding a priority and have robust and streamlined systems in place that are highly effective in protecting young people. Where risk of harm or potential abuse is identified staff are prompt in their response and act in a timely manner to address any child protection concerns. Young people say they feel safe and are not subject to bullying in the home. However, when there are disagreements between peers in the home staff are proactive and address behaviour appropriately by encouraging open communication between young people.

The home monitors visitors and records are kept accordingly, however, contractors to the home did not sign in the visitors book. Although this was an oversight staff ensured all contract staff did not enter the building and young people remained within staff sight at all times. Staff identified a risk to young people, staff and visitors following building work to the property and immediately ensured that the risk was removed to safeguard and protect everyone's welfare.

Young people who go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on return. Due to the positive relationships young people have formed with friends episodes of missing have significantly reduced. The home has very clear and supportive systems in place to aid and assist the safe and positive return of young

people who go missing from care. The home provides additional support through young people accessing an advocate. There are detailed risk assessments in place for each individual who goes missing to identify the appropriate action to take and how to return safely.

The home applies positive and proactive behaviour management strategies that are constantly applied. Staff are effective in giving verbal praise. The good relationships between staff and young people encourage positive behaviour that reduces the need to intervene physically. As a result physical intervention has not been necessary. There are appropriate sanction and reward systems in place that are fair and proportionate to address unwanted behaviour. Staff complete room searches to ensure young people are safe. Young people understand and are aware of the reasons for the search and records are maintained in accordance to statutory guidance. The home has excellent risk assessments and behaviour management plans in place. Consequently, they protect young people while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development.

There is a very effective recruitment system in place and staff are carefully selected and vetted to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm young people. There has been no new staff since the last inspection. The shortfall of staffing is covered by staff from other small group homes without compromise to other services. This ensures the continuity of care and keeps young people safe.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable in managing allegations or suspicion of harm fairly, quickly, and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for young people. This means young people's welfare is protected at all times.

Young people feel the home is a safe place to live and the home is maintained to a very high standard. Staff have improved the fire log book and now routinely check the doors for defects when undertaking fire fighting equipment checks. Fire drills are completed on a regular basis and all staff receive training in fire prevention. Additionally staff have received appropriate training. Young people fully understand and take part in fire drills. This ensures their safety in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

This service provides young people with a good level of care and support. The home is effectively and efficiently managed and recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on. The home has a new roof and fire doors have been fixed to a suitable standard. The Registered Manager is conscientious in leading a well balanced and committed team to deliver a continuously improving service. There is a strong sense of value for the team which is driven by the passion and drive of the manager. As a result the home has improved outcomes for young people.

The provider meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. Young

people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives of the home and what services and facilities it provides. The home is adequately resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The manager is now more actively involved in the home's budget and as a result feels a bigger sense of value, trust and respect. The home is routinely monitored as part of quality assurance. Regulation 33 visits take place along with the regular inspection under Schedule 6. Young people are consulted with wherever possible to ensure they continue to contribute to the service delivery.

The manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and there is a business plan in place, however, the plan is not individual to the home and does not specify clear, identified action to develop the service further. The staff are updated and involved in the consultation regarding development of the service and as a result feel motivated and valued.

Staff receive high quality training to enhance their individual skills and to keep them up-to-date with professional and legal developments. There is a comprehensive training matrix identifying both mandatory and additional training for staff's development. Through supervision staff identify their personal development needs to ensure their skills and knowledge is maintained. All staff receive quality supervision and support, however, there is no electronic or written record to show the Registered Manager has also received adequate support through supervision.

Records are stored securely and contribute to the understanding of the young person's life. Some records are not clear or kept up to date and impact on evaluating systems. All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the registered person to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.