

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two children who 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**.

This is a good service with some outstanding features that provides positive outcomes for young people. The staff take full account of the individual needs of young people and provide effective, personalised, well planned care. The home provides a nurturing environment where young people feel safe and protected from harm.

The relationships that young people have with staff are trusting and respectful. Young people are happy with the care they receive and the quality of the service. The views of young people are captured through consultation that enhances the running of the home.

The management is effective and strong leaders strive to improve, develop and drive forward the focus on improving outcomes for young people. The manager of the home takes action to secure improvement through regular monitoring. There are some shortfalls that have a minimal impact on young people and as a result, two recommendations have been made in relation to monitoring and records.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept

by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2)

- ensure staff understand the nature of records maintained and follow the homes policy for keeping and retaining them. In particular relation to the medication policy. (NMS 22.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress in attending education and achievement from their starting point. Where difficulties arise, young people work hard to improve because they want to achieve success and recognise their potential. Some young people make remarkable progress and achieve 100% attendance. A staff member said, 'She is already completing work before the deadline and has recently achieved 100% in a Maths test.' This highlights the fact that young people improve their education despite the difficulties they face.

Young people's health is good. However, some lack of responsibility by young people to attend planned appointments means their health needs are not always met. Young people understand how to balance a healthy diet and take an active role in planning, shopping and cooking their own meals. Young people remain active and take physical exercise. This improves their well-being and fitness.

Young people remain in contact with people who are significant in their lives. Contact for some young people has significantly improved. As a result, young people's relationships and bonds with their family are stronger giving them a sense of belonging.

Young people benefit from one-to-one support from staff to discuss their thoughts and feelings. This enables young people to understand the reasons they are in care. Additional external health services provide further emotional support. This helps young people understand who they are and improves self-esteem and confidence. A social worker confirmed this by saying, 'There has been a significant increase in confidence since placement.'

Young people are confident in making plans for leaving care because they develop life skills that prepare them for a smooth transition. Pathway plans are clear and developed jointly with young people, to ensure they leave care the way they choose. As a result, young people leave care with maturity and confidence to face life's challenges.

Quality of care

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

Staff have excellent relationships with young people that are maintained through mutual trust and respect. Young people know and understand the boundaries in place because staff are consistent in their approach and recognise the individual needs of young people. As a result, behaviour is appropriate and managed exceptionally well with effective praise and reward.

Staff work hard to promote the rights of young people through regular discussions and residents meetings. Young people know and understand how to complain because the home provides an independent advocate that works with young people to assist them to have their say. Grumbles and complaints are dealt with sensitively and in a timely manner. This means the rights of young people are promoted.

The manager and staff build strong, robust and effective relationships with external professionals that work in joint partnership to provide excellent quality of care to young people. As a result, young people receive the right care tailored to meet their individual needs.

Staff work tirelessly to support young people to fulfil their full potential, despite the challenges that some young people face. Clear, robust placement planning assists young people to achieve their aspirations and to shape the care they receive. Staff act on and listen to the views and opinions of young people. As a result, young people feel listened to and valued.

The home provides a nurturing, relaxed environment where young people feel a sense of belonging. The home is excellently presented and respected by young people and staff reflecting the care and attention it has been shown. As a result, young people take more pride in their belongings and the home in which they live.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say they feel safe in the home and staff place safeguarding as a high priority. Staff are highly efficient, skilled and knowledgeable in safeguarding practice. The home has clear and robust procedures in place that effectively support the safety of young people.

Young people benefit from robust individualised risk assessments that manage and protect them in their engagement in specific activities. Young people do not present with anti-social behaviour because staff provide firm boundaries, coupled with fair sanction and reward systems to promote positive behaviour. As a result, physical intervention is not used and behaviour improves.

Young people say they go missing from care. During these events the home works exceptionally well with the local police to return young people quickly and safely back home. A police officer said, 'Staff are great and do a really good job; they are proactive with the risks presented.' Joint partnership working with the local community police is exceptionally good and provides young people with advice and

support during regular visits to the home. This raises young people's awareness about missing from care. As a result, missing episodes are reduced.

The environment is safe and young people confirm they take part in regular fire drills. All staff are trained in the fire procedures and are clear about action to take in the event of a fire. The home undertakes regular health and safety monitoring to maintain a safe environment. This means the home provides a safe place for young people, staff and visitors.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a Registered Manager who is passionate and committed to improving outcomes for young people. The staff team further support the smooth operation of the home because they are experienced, child-centred and skilled in their roles. As a result, the aims and objectives of the service remain a primary focus in delivering good quality care.

The manager monitors the home on a monthly basis to address any shortfalls identified. Not all staff work to the home's policies and procedures in relation to recording when medication is opened and the manager has not identified this. Although there is no impact to young people at this time due to the type of medication, there is significant potential for harm if this is not addressed by the manager.

Staff benefit from regular supervision to support their personal development and training needs. Staffing levels are good and provide individualised support to meet the needs of young people. Specific work has been identified and implemented to explore sexuality and gender issues. This has improved young people's opinions and confidence by them having opportunities to explore equality and diversity issues.

The provider meets the aims and objectives in the Statement of Purpose. Young people, staff and the placing authority are clear about the aims and objectives and what service and facilities it provides. Young people benefit from a beautifully presented, well maintained and resourced home.

The manager promptly notifies all significant events relating to the protection of young people to the required authorities. Staff take action following any incident. Records are stored securely and correctly and reflect young people's life experiences and future plans.

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.