

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. The key strengths lie within the strong committed staff team lead by a dedicated manager. The individual needs of young people are delivered through well-planned and personalised care that effectively enhances their welfare. The home provides an environment where young people feel safe and protected from harm.

Young people are happy with the care they receive and the relationships between staff and young people are trusting and respectful. The views of young people about the quality of the service are captured through regular consultation that assist the running of the home and promote the quality of care.

Leaders and managers strive to recognise strengths and weakness within the service and take action to secure improvement through regular monitoring and review.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people work hard to achieve good progress in education attainment and achievement despite the difficulties they face, taking account of their individual starting point. Young people say, 'my education is better since I came here, I am at a different school this has helped me progress'. As a result, young people's self-esteem and confidence has improved.

Young people take responsibility for their own health with support from staff. Young

people understand the importance of their emotional and physical well-being and benefit from individual health plans that highlight external support necessary to sustain and improve their well-being. As a result, young people remain fit and well. Young people take part in planning, shopping and preparing meals to assist them in practical life skills. This means young people's independence is maximised and as a result, young people are prepared for independence.

Young people benefit from regular contact with people who are significant in their lives. Young people say, 'I have regular contact with my family and friends. Friends do visit me in the home and are made to feel welcome'. This means young people develop emotional attachment and recognise the importance of good healthy relationships.

Quality of care

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

The relationships between staff and young people are excellent because staff have clear boundaries in place that support and define what is acceptable within the home. Staff place young people central to the care they provide and have high aspirations for them all. Young people say, 'I get on with the staff and the relationships are good, this helps my behaviour because I cannot get away with things because of the boundaries'. Staff interact on a mutual and respectful basis that promotes healthy relationships. Young people receive praise and reward for their appropriate manner. This underpins the positive culture promoted in the home.

Staff provide clear and effective care planning to maximise the learning potential for young people. Where barriers to learning occur staff take the necessary steps to reduce the impact on educational achievement. This is effective because communication between staff and external partners is open and transparent. This means young people receive the support they need to succeed and progress.

Staff actively seek young people's views, wishes and feelings. Staff say, 'young people are given opportunity to say how they want the home to be decorated and the garden has been improved as a result of consultation'. Regular care planning and residents meetings provide young people the opportunity to shape the care they wish to receive. For example, friends visit the home frequently following young people's request. Young people say, we have meetings and talk about lots of different things, I do feel like staff listen to me and I do have a say. This means young people's opinion is valued. Staff promote and empower young people to recognise their individuality and that of others. As a result, young people accept difference because staff maintain a fair and equal approach.

The home provides young people with a clear complaints procedure tailored to their understanding. Young people say they know how to raise complaints and have access to the complaints form. The manager meets on a regular basis with all young people to gain their feedback on the service. The manager says, 'this helps staff to gain a reflective view from young people to support their care package'. As a result,

grumbles or complaints are dealt with in a timely manner. Furthermore, young people have access to the independent advocate who visits the home. As a result, young people's rights are promoted.

The home provides a healthy environment for young people to access the services they need to support all aspects of their health and well-being. Young people benefit from exceptionally good support from staff because staff recognise the needs of young people and work hard to promote their health. For example, external support services visit the home to provide additional intervention required tailored to meet individual needs in line with their health care plan. As a result, young people address health concerns and develop better emotional health and well-being.

The home provides young people with an environment that reflects care and attention. Young people respect the home they live in and take an active role in maintaining it to a high standard. Staff are caring and nurturing in their approach and as a result, young people feel comfortable and welcome in 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 a high priority to keeping young people safe. Young people rarely take part in socially unacceptable behaviour and benefit from effective behaviour management plans. There are robust risk assessments to protect and reduce activities that may cause potential harm. However, some risk taking behaviour that young people choose to take part in does make them vulnerable and potentially places them at risk. Staff ensure that all the necessary precautions are in place to monitor and evaluate young people's safety and prompt action is taken during times when they are at risk of harm. As a result, the safety of young people is protected as much as possible given each individual circumstance.

Young people understand that the home does not tolerate bullying. Young people say they are not at risk of bullying behaviour and know how to raise concerns through the complaints or advocacy service. Young people say they have a key to their own room and staff respect their privacy and always knock the door before entering. This protects young people's rights to privacy.

Young people's behaviour has improved from their starting point. Young people say, 'boundaries are in place to keep me safe'. The home provides strategies that effectively reduce incidents of unacceptable behaviour. For example, fair sanctions and rewards reduce the need for physical intervention because of their effectiveness. As a result, physical intervention is rarely used.

Young people rarely go missing from the home. Young people comment they are treated well when they return to the home and police complete welfare checks to ensure their safety. Staff receive training in how to deal with episodes of missing and

take the necessary action in any event. This ensures early intervention to protect and reduce the risk of harm.

The home provides a strong vetting process to reduce the risk of unsuitable candidates having access to young people. Young people benefit from a stable and committed staff group who are familiar with their needs and provide consistent continuity of care. This helps to keep young people safe.

Staff complete regular fire safety drills and checks and young people take part and say they know and understand what action to take in the event of a fire. Staff are proactive in managing health and safety monitoring which further protects young people, staff and visitors. This ensures the environment remains fit for purpose and is free from hazardous events.

Leadership and management

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

The home is lead by a dedicated and committed Registered Manager who is supported by a caring and skilled staff team. Young people benefit from a service that is child-centred in improving outcomes and maximising potential. Staff and young people express their views about the service and the manager acts on the feedback to improve the quality of the service. As a result, the home has provided resources for young people to explore issues regarding sexuality and gender identity. This promotes equality and diversity. As a result, young people continue to receive care on an individual basis.

The manager addresses recommendations to improve the service and as a result young people now have personal education plans to define their education support. Additionally, there is now a home development plan that identifies the current operation of the home and any planned changes. For example the manager says, 'the plan identifies new ideas on how to engage with young people through the use of a detailed record sheet. This will track how well young people are doing. Performance monitoring will show at a glance progress of where we were and how we have improved. For example, school attendance can be monitored on percentage gaps to enable strategies to improve. As a result, patterns and trends will be easier to track.

Young people continue to receive good quality care because of regular monitoring undertaken by the Regulation 33 visitor and schedule 6 monitoring. This ensures the service tracks performance and identifies strengths and weakness to improve the quality of care.

Staff benefit from supervision, appraisal and personal development review to enhance and assist their learning opportunities. This maximise the quality of care young people receive. The home now benefits from a newly appointed assistant manager. This has improved staffing levels and provided the service with additional skill and knowledge to enhance service delivery.

All significant events relating to the protection of young people are notified to the required authorities. Staff are clear about what action to take and act accordingly. The home protects personal and confidential information and records are stored in suitable locked facilities.

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.