

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Linda Bond
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home provides care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a private provider. The company provides education through contracted services from another private provider, who operates a small specialist school approximately 20 miles away.

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**.

The home is providing a good level of care with good outcomes for young people and measures to ensure young people are safe. Young people recognise and appreciate the care and support they receive from a very committed, dedicated and caring staff team. They clearly enjoy living at the home. Young people make good progress and their needs and views are central to the work undertaken at the home. The home provides young people with a nurturing environment in which to live, grow and reach their full potential. The staff team are very proactive at engaging the young people in education which has resulted in a positive response from the young people.

The accommodation is well maintained and young people like the peaceful location. Staff are competent, experienced and enthusiastic. The mutually respectful relationship they have with young people enables them to work effectively and positively address issues. The organisation has proactively implemented the new national minimum standards. There is a strong commitment to providing a high quality service.

At the point of this inspection there were no shortfalls noted and therefore no recommendations or requirements are made.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from excellent personalised support from staff, which addresses their identified individual needs, and ensures young people reach their full potential. Consultation with the young people is excellent and at the heart of all the work the home undertakes. This is evidenced by the young people being part of the staff daily handover sessions, having young people's house meetings and, most importantly for the young people, being fully involved in the development of any plans for them. Young people have positive and strong relationships with staff and this allows them to feel comfortable and able to approach staff at any opportunity.

Young people live in an extremely warm, caring, nurturing and supportive environment which stems from sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect. This is supported by consistent and clear boundaries, and expectations of which the young people are fully aware. The interactions observed between staff and young people show mutual respect and understanding. As a result, from the very beginning young people grow in confidence, develop emotional resilience and feel safe to learn about their lives.

Young people flourish as they receive on going encouragement to achieve their educational potential. The home provides them with opportunities for intellectual development and good nurturing of strengths and practical skills. All young people are in full-time education. The organisation recognises that all young people may not be able to access mainstream education; they therefore have access to a small registered independent school. Good communication and relationships between care staff and education staff provides effective continuity of care. Young people respond well to the education provision and have received achievement certificates to verify their success.

The home ensures that young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and participate in activities that promote exercise and well-being. Young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs and are based on their known likes and dislikes. Opportunities for young people to plan and cook meals are provided; these are fun and enjoyable and lead towards young people developing independent living skills. The home encourages family-style mealtimes meals are decided upon on a daily basis in consultation with the young people.

Records confirm that young people's health needs are clearly identified and these are met through individual detailed health care plans. Young people are supported to access appropriate health care professionals and records are maintained of all appointments and outcomes. The home is very proactive in providing guidance and support in relation to health and social issues including alcohol, smoking and illegal substance abuse. However, no young people currently living at the home smoke or use alcohol.

The home is proactive in ensuring that young people are able to maintain contact with their families, friends and any significant others. Any restriction in contact is clearly identified in individual placement plans. Young people are supported by a skilled and experience staff team that provide unconditional care and warmth,

thereby allowing young people to talk safely of their experiences following contact.

Quality of care

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

One of the key strengths of the home is the management and staff team. A mix of genders and ages provide young people with positive role models, consistency, respect and warmth. By doing so young people receive continuity of good quality care. Staff actively address equality and diversity issues and help young people develop a positive self view. The warm, safe atmosphere enables young people and staff to share their respective cultures and openly discuss issues.

Young people benefit from the home's personalised approach to care planning. The home embraces the principles of normalisation, social inclusion and unconditional positive regard for the individual. Placement plans clearly outline their individual needs and objectives. Plan's detail specific aims relating to each young person's, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, culture, family background and any disability. One-to-one sessions enable young people to work on their goals, which are linked to their placement plan. Staff work effectively motivating young people and helping them to recognise their unique qualities and talents.

Daily discussions, regular house meetings, key work sessions and progress reviews provide an opportunity for young people to express their opinions. By doing so young people have a voice and are able to influence decision making. Young people are involved in planning the annual holiday and development projects in the home: for example, the building of a barbeque and pond.

A clear and easily understandable complaints procedure is available. There is evidence that young people have used the home's complaints procedure and staff effectively manage their grievances.

The home demonstrates a strong commitment to young people's health and emotional well-being. Staff support young people to access local health services and appropriately manage health-related matters. Medicines are securely kept with excellent recording systems to ensure young people are safeguarded. Therapeutic principles inform the home's working practices. The organisation also has its own counselling psychologist. Young people can request individual sessions. The psychologist also provides a valued service to staff, enabling them to work more effectively with young people.

Young people receive support in relation to the management of their behaviour, this is assessed and guidance is provided for the staff team in how to address behaviours, and to promote acceptable behaviour. The home conducts detailed risk assessments in relation to this.

Young people reside in a detached, rurally located property. It is well maintained, clean and very homely. Staff model excellent behaviour and by doing so young

people have a respect for their home and possessions.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

The home has robust and clear policies and procedures to promote young people's safety and welfare and all care staff have received safeguarding training. This includes protection from bullying although this currently not an issue at the home. The home maintains open and supportive contact with placing authorities and the local safeguarding children board. The manager confirms that there have been no safeguarding issues at the home since the last inspection

Care staff spoken with demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures. The care team are vigilant in recognising particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people, and take appropriate action to address them. Comprehensive placement plans clearly identify risks and protective factors and there are clear plans to address these.

Young people enjoy spending time in the home and there are no episodes of young people being missing without authority. If this was to occur staff are trained, experienced and knowledgeable of procedures to follow.

Young people are supported to develop socially-acceptable behaviour through the use of encouragement and the reinforcement of positive behaviour which includes a reward system which the young people were involved in developing. This is also supported by the comprehensive individual risk assessments for young people and the calm, settled environment in which they live. The behaviour of the young people is exceptional and they are a credit to themselves and the staff team. Although the staff team receive regular training in safe holding techniques these have not been used since the last inspection and there has been minimum use of sanctions.

There is a strong, stable and committed staff team. There have been no changes to the current staff team since the last inspection. However, all staff at the home are subject to a robust vetting and recruitment process which has been adhered to. Staff files reflect this.

The home promotes health and safety and fire safety with well-established practice which is supported by comprehensive records, fire safety checks and the servicing of the fire system and fire fighting equipment.

Leadership and management

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

Young people live in a home which is effectively and efficiently managed. Staff report they are supported well by the homes manager stating 'this is the best home I have worked at'. The homes manager equally reports that the staff team are dedicated,

committed and genuinely caring.

Staff promptly notify Ofsted of any serious incidents. The Statement of Purpose comprehensively details the home's aims, objectives and working practice. Staff successfully implement the equality and diversity policy and statement. A children's guide is available; although it comes in one format only, it is colourful, relevant and useful. The homes manager plans to include the young people in the updating of any literature. The organisation has proactively adapted procedures and documentation to conform to the new national minimum standards. The recommendation from the previous inspection has been appropriately addressed. Risk assessments cover a broad range of issues which include the self administration of medication.

There is clear evidence of both the homes manager and the registered provider routinely carrying out Regulation 33 and 34 monthly monitoring and comprehensive reports being produced from these visits. There is also clear evidence in the homes records of monitoring.

Young people benefit from the supportive leadership style which empowers staff and thereby encourages them to use their initiative. Staff feel valued and speak highly of the organisation. Within the home the manager is very organised and efficiently delegates areas of responsibility to specific staff members. There is a strong awareness of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Staff contribute towards the home's comprehensive development plan. This extensively highlights the home's progress in meeting and exceeding the national minimum standards.

A staff team that is well balanced with both ages and gender, provides the young people with an excellent range of experience, skills, personalities and knowledge. Management ensures staff receive regular supervision that is of a good quality, by doing so staff have time to critically reflect, discuss and develop practice. The home ensures that there are the correct numbers of staff on duty at all times to meet the needs of the young people. This usually means there is at least a one-to-one staff to young people ratio. Two care staff undertake sleep-in duties. The manager and care team are very flexible and will work extra hours and change shifts if required. If needed, relief staff are employed and the home ensures that continuity and consistency of care is maintained.

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.