

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Natalie Burton
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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 registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A private organisation owns and operates this setting. The organisation provides a registered education facility which is based locally.

Overall effectiveness

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

This is a good service that positively impacts on young people's lives. Young people make exceptional progress in a number of key areas, notably education attendance and achievement, reducing challenging behaviours and developing self-esteem. Overall young people's welfare significantly improves which enables them to make progress in other areas. Young people are positive about their care, relationships with staff and say that they are well supported. One young person said 'I feel much happier and more comfortable living here now' and 'I get on really well with the staff'.

The effectiveness with which the home provides personalised care is an outstanding feature of this service, and takes full account of the individual needs of each young person, whilst promoting positive outcomes for all young people. Young people are consistently rewarded for their own individual achievements and development. Staff are enthusiastic, trained to a high standard and understand the complex needs of young people well. The manager understands the strengths and areas of further development for the home. However, records of physical intervention and monitoring visits to the home are not in line with regulation.

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
33 (2001)	supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)© to the HMCI and the registered manager of the home (Regulation 33 (5))	30/12/2011
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in a children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose. (Regulation	30/12/2011

	17B(3)(a-i))	
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Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people achieve exceptional outcomes and are provided with high quality care within a warm, caring, nurturing environment with firm and consistent boundaries. They make considerable progress in all aspects of their assessed needs and are increasingly becoming aware of how their choices and actions impact upon their lives. Young people are supported to develop mature responses to anger, frustration and disappointment and increasingly express their feelings more positively. Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care, which enables excellent tailored responses to individual young people. As a result, young people are supported to understand their life events and how they can move forward. Staff support young people to make outstanding progress based on their assessed abilities and needs. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. This results in young people beginning to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

Young people grow in confidence and develop good emotional resilience because they are treated with respect, have their needs clearly assessed and their individuality facilitated and celebrated. Young people enjoy engaging in meaningful relationships with staff. These strong and positive attachments are demonstrated by how positively young people talk about the staff.

Staff work unwaveringly to support young people to attend their education provisions and young people have made significant progress in their educational attendance. They are able to try different opportunities and develop new skills. Young people feel good about themselves as they are consistently congratulated and rewarded for achievements. They do exceptionally well and earn treats as part of their behaviour and education incentives.

Young people's health including physical, emotional and psychological health is actively supported. Young people demonstrate increasing awareness of how to live a healthy life; they eat healthily and take regular exercise, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, swimming and bike riding. Staff actively promote healthy choices and well-being. Young people are encouraged to develop self-awareness about the benefits of good personal hygiene. This helps to increase young people's self-esteem and self-image.

Young people feel valued because they are encouraged to express their views, feelings and wishes. They feel listened to because staff make time to talk about their interests and concerns, support them with family contact and escort them to appointments and sessions with other support agencies. They help make decisions about menus, group activities and in identifying their own personal interests and individual hobbies. For example, bowling, camping and gardening.

Young people prepare for independent living through cooking and laundry. They get help to explore behaviours which are risky for them, within a controlled environment. These skills help a successful transition to independence and adult life.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive and respectful relationships with staff and each other. They are looked after by a competent and well trained staff team and they report that they are happy living in the home and feel listened to by staff. There is excellent structure and effective framework for care, education support and behaviour management. Young people are cared for and develop confidence in a stable and nurturing environment. Staff maintain positive relationships with young people while consistently implementing clear expectations and boundaries. Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic in encouraging young people to explore opportunities to develop self-confidence and achieve their full potential. These relationships are a key strength to the positive outcomes for young people.

Young people are supported by staff who have a clear commitment to promoting diversity and equality. Staff have comprehensive understanding of the individuality, social, cultural and religious backgrounds of young people. They know about and enable young people to access a diverse range of resources and facilities in their local community. Staff provide an environment where young people can express themselves and also explore and develop their awareness of diversity, tolerance and equality.

Staff practice is exceptionally child-centred and personalised, the manager and staff analyse each young person's needs and continually review the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies. Placement plans support young people's emotional, behavioural and learning processes. There is good assessment and review of plans and the participation of young people are key to this process. This makes sure young people make significant progress, aspire and achieve their full potential. Social workers identify that young people have significantly progressed since living at the home; they particularly praise the care and support young people receive. One social worker reported 'the staff help young people to recognise how they can make changes to improve their life' and 'there is nothing I can identify that they could do better'. Excellent key work support encourages young people to work through difficulties and supports the key areas in care plans. As a result, young people feel consulted, fully contribute to their plans and know what they are working towards. Equally, staff celebrate and share achievements to ensure young people receive positive recognition.

Excellent systems support young people in school. Staff work in an integrated manner to promote positive outcomes for young people. This high level of communication between home and schools means that everybody is aware of achievement, issues and areas of development.

Young people look after their home, which is well maintained. There are good levels of privacy for young people; they have their own bedroom key and privacy locks for bathrooms. There is good indoor and outdoor space.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Safeguarding young people is a priority of the staff team and central to their practice. Young people say they feel safe and they are supported to keep safe. High levels of supervision both inside and outside the home recognise their significant vulnerability. Staff are proactive and safeguarding strategies include and engage young people so there are significant improvements in their behaviour. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding. As a result, they demonstrate a good understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being.

Practice is informed by clearly assessed risks which balance minimising risks without impeding young people's independence. As a result, young people are not unnecessarily restricted when accessing the community and activities. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is outstanding and reinforces the very caring atmosphere that can be witnessed throughout the home. Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the home's behaviour management policy and strategies. Staff are comfortable with their role of setting clear understood boundaries whilst maintaining a high quality of relationship between themselves and young people. One young person said 'I feel safe and comfortable here'.

Young people are informed of their rights and the range of independent people and organisations that are available for them. Staff work hard to protect young people from the impact of bullying, anti-social or intimidating behaviour and young people are clear about their right to feel safe from this. Young people are enthusiastic about the praise and rewards for positive behaviour, and staff are enthusiastic at seeing this progress. This positive behavioural strategy means sanctions and physical interventions are rare. However, whilst the impact on young people has been minimal, records are not in line with regulations. For example, they do not consistently show the duration of the restraint, have the signature of the person making the record, or show the effectiveness of the measure of control.

The home is safe and well maintained. There are established systems and structures to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations. Environmental risk assessments are in place and these ensure the home is fully informed of potential hazards in order to reduce risks. There are safe recruitment procedures within the home.

Leadership and management

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

A good quality Statement of Purpose outlines the aims and objectives of the service. The home is operating in line with this statement and the principles are understood by interested parties, including young people. Young people benefit from consistent, enthusiastic and committed staff that focuses on their needs and welfare. As a result, young people's progress is clearly evident and noted by local authorities.

Staff feel well supported, supervised and involved in making decisions. Staff report development and training opportunities are available and varied to progress their careers. The manager and staff team are well qualified and sufficient in number to meet the needs of young people. Regular meetings, supervisions and appraisals ensure practice improves further and the focus remains on young people's needs and development.

A development plan outlines the aims and objectives for the year with clear reviews to chart progress. Key documents, policies and procedures are regularly revisited to ensure practice is current, relevant to young people's needs and accountable.

An effective level of monitoring of young people's care and experiences ensures practice is safe and the quality of care remains consistently high. Independent visits contribute further to reflective practice and driving improvement, however, the report has not consistently been made available within an appropriate timescale. As a result the Registered Manager has been delayed in responding to and acting on issues of concerns raised. The Registered Manager has completed monthly internal monitoring and therefore the impact on young people has been minimal.

Young people are consistently consulted about their care and therefore settle in the home and are clear about their care plans. Requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Medication stock control records and risk assessments for young people are now sufficient, night-time fire drills occur and any complaints made have a written outcome.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.