

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	David Morgan
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This home is operated by a private organisation and is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties; it is operated in line with a clear therapeutic model. The organisation also provides a registered school around which its homes in this area are based.

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 operating at a high standard with evidence of excellent practice in several areas. Young people are happy in the home and make clear progress in their education and also in their learning more generally. They gain confidence and are more able to conduct themselves safely and with greater independence. There is effective cooperation with other professionals and parents. This combines to good effect with the organisation's integrated education, therapy and care provision.

Young people are protected effectively from unsafe situations; this is a reflection of the high staffing levels, careful consideration of risks, and the engagement of young people in a wide range of activities. Care is highly personalised and is clearly focused on individual's needs.

The young people enjoy the home and get on well with their staff. Any difficulties are addressed in a considered and proportionate way that encourages positive behaviour. Staff are well trained in the application of a therapeutic approach. Leaders and managers ensure that the home is working in the best interests of the young people.

At the last full inspection the home was judged to be operating at a good standard and this has been maintained and further improvement is being targeted. This inspection identifies a small number of areas for improvement. These include providing improved attention to individual targets so that young people make progress as quickly as possible. Improvements are also recommended in the way the

development plan is compiled so that the views of interested parties are integrated into strategies to improve the service further.

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 wishes, feelings and views of children and those significant to them are taken into account in developing the home (NMS 1.7)
- ensure there is a system in place to monitor the quality and adequacy of record keeping and take action when needed. This is with regard to ensuring the security of the complaints records (NMS 22.1)
- ensure each child's placement plan is monitored by a key worker within the home who ensures that the requirements of the plan are implemented in the day-to-day care of that child. This is with regard to those requirements being measurable, attainable and addressed in a timely way. (NMS 25.2)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from an immensely supportive environment that addresses their individual needs comprehensively. In particular, they are taught holistically via a carefully managed combination of care, education and therapy. This means that they make clear progress in terms of their personal and interpersonal skills as well as more academic matters. Young people gain self-esteem and engage more effectively and appropriately with others. They are central to how the home operates and improvements are always being considered. Recently, young people started to attend shift-handovers, which is an excellent way of making them feel involved and valued.

Educational attendance is excellent at almost 100 per cent and is fully supported by care staff who attend school every day. Staff ensure that issues from lessons are pursued at home so that young people learn as much as possible. The transition of young people to college is carefully managed to ensure it is as effective as possible. For example, staff follow young people to college until their use of public transport is established. This ensures that young people are competent. Young people consider that these sorts of measures are undertaken with appropriate consideration for their feelings. One said, 'It's an excellent house.' This is supported by people outside the home, such as parents.

In particular, young people gain self-confidence. This means they are able to benefit more substantially from the wide-ranging opportunities that are provided. These include leisure and sporting opportunities both with staff and with community groups. Young people are pleased with the holidays they experienced in the summer

and recall special moments, for example, having the biggest bed in the caravan. Events are recorded for them by means of photographs and mementoes. Young people are helped to support local volunteering initiatives, too. Such community engagement provides important lessons for later life and increases young people's self-esteem. Young people enjoy healthy lifestyles in terms of diet and activity and their medical needs are addressed well. They comment on certain shortfalls in the activity room and the manager is addressing these.

Young people progress so they can act safely and constructively. This is facilitated through the therapeutic approach which addresses their views of the world. Part of this is the establishment of effective working relationships with people outside the home, for example between staff and parents. Young people appreciate that the adults around them are giving them the same messages. They maintain regular family contact in line with any restrictions, which is an important part of their

Quality of care

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

The organisation ensures that staff operate in a child-friendly way. Consequently, staff are well-trained and able to address young people's needs. This results in a calm and supportive environment in which young people flourish. The property is particularly well presented and appropriately located for young people to develop their interests and skills. This also helps to make them feel valued. In addition, there are a variety of forms of consultation, both formal and informal, that occur regularly. Subsequently, young people make a difference in terms of choice of activities and the home's presentation. They can also choose their key workers, which gives them a more equal role in these important and very positive relationships. One young person said, 'It's proper sound here.' Young people learn to establish and sustain positive relationships, which help them deal effectively with any setbacks.

The views of other people are also sought on an on-going basis, for example, when new residents are going to be admitted. This ensures that young people are as well matched with each other as possible. In turn, this contributes to the smooth running of the home. Young people know how to complain but also have adults external to the home to whom they can turn. Complaints are rare and appropriate procedures are in place to deal with them. However, the storage of paperwork is not sufficiently secure. This means that information is at risk of being lost.

Staff are consistently clear about young people's needs and ensure these are met on a daily basis. For example, their religious needs are routinely reviewed and they are taken to churches of their choice. Dietary needs are carefully addressed as well. Records reflect this thoroughness. However, the care targets in placement and in transition plans are less precise in some cases and they are not specific, timescales for implementation are not clear, and targets are not always measurable. As a result, unrealistic targets have been set in some cases that have delayed progress.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people benefit from a well organised home in which young people follow full and constructive routines, which include appropriate free time. Risks are carefully assessed for each young person with interested parties; effective measures are put in place to reduce risk to acceptable levels. Staff know how to address any safeguarding concerns.

Staff are fully conversant with the organisation's therapeutic behaviour management policies; they anticipate difficulties, which, as a result, are often avoided. This is reflected in the particularly low number of measures of control, incidents of young people going missing, and physical intervention. This credit-worthy performance means that young people feel safe and are kept safe. Young people do not perceive the home as being led by rules. This is a good indicator of effective practice by staff.

Leadership and management

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

There is a high calibre of personnel on site and the home also benefits from effective leadership by the organisation. A clear model of care is applied well to young people who have very specific needs. These features are reflected in an up-to-date Statement of Purpose and children's guide.

A new manager and deputy manager (who has previous experience in the home) are in post and are enthusiastic in ensuring that standards of care are maintained and improved. The manager is applying for registration with Ofsted. Attention is being paid to developments outside the organisation and strong links are being renewed with neighbours and professionals.

The previous inspection made one requirement and this has been addressed. Monthly monitoring reports are now sent to Ofsted, as required. The ideas of the staff team for improvement are reflected in a new development plan, which shows clearly how further improvements will be achieved. The views of young people are incorporated into monthly monitoring visits. However, it is not sufficiently clear how their views and those of people who are significant to them are specifically taken into account in developing the home.

Staff are well trained and benefit from an extensive training programme. They feel positive about the thorough support they receive and acknowledge the opportunities available to develop their skills and to progress. Staffing arrangements are based on the needs of young people and team members have a range of experience. There is a good level of skill, ability and enthusiasm with which to improve the service further.

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 children's homes.