

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Deborah White
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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 children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people of either sex, aged between 8 and 17 years old, who may be experiencing a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems. The home is owned and operated by a private provider.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people benefit from having clear, robust placement plans that reflect their individuality. Young people have very positive views about their care and are safe. Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weakness of the home to continually improve practice. All young people have progressed well from their starting point to achieve very good outcomes. Young people are listened to and their views taken seriously to enable them to take responsibility for their lives.

Restraints are only carried out as a last resort but not all records are fully completed and young people do not have their views, about restraints, recorded to ascertain how they feel. The Registered manager carries out regular monitoring but does not satisfactorily identify, or analyse, any patterns or trends of behaviour to inform the home's development plans.

Areas for improvement

Statutory 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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control or restraint, a written record is made in the volume kept for the purpose which includes: a description of the measure used; the details of behaviour leading to the measure; and details of the methods used to avoid the need to use that measure. (Regulation 17B (3) (b) (c) and (4) (b))	31/12/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where a child has been restrained they are encouraged to add their views and comments to the records made (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes 2.103)
- ensure the registered person identifies any trends and issues of concern to continually improve the quality of the care provided. (Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 5: Children's Homes 3.14))

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people have very good relationships with staff that are based on mutual respect. They are confident, friendly and very good company. This enables them form meaningful relationships with adults around them and their peers. Young people are resilient and have a positive self view of themselves that will equip them to move forward into a bright future.

Young people enjoy good health which promotes positive feelings of well being. They achieve very well at school and have made excellent progress from their starting point. A range of meaningful activities introduces young people to new and exciting experiences to give them a good knowledge of what opportunities are available to pursue and enjoy their leisure time. A young person said 'One of the best things here is activities. I go swimming and climbing and staff take you out to play football'.

Young people especially benefit from being encouraged and supported to follow their own sporting interests. Young people are learning about team working and how to be considerate of others to achieve a joint goal. For example, young people who are part of a sporting team have worked hard to engage in team sports at a high level and have achieved outstanding results in local league tables.

Young people are fully engaged in their local community and contribute very well to a number of local projects to fully integrate them with friends and neighbours. Good relationships have been built up and established with local people so that young people feel happy and comfortable socialising in their home environment. Young people actively contribute to the running of the home and their thoughts, views and opinions are taken seriously. A young person said 'I think we are listened to. Staff ask us about how we feel, I can talk to the staff'. Young people are integral to any major decisions about their home and the care they receive. This empowers young people to instigate positive changes in their lives and gives them a forum to express how they feel.

Young people are able to maintain important relationships in their lives by being fully

supported on contact visits. Staff ensure all children's contact arrangements are current and young people are given the support they need to understand where some contact visits may not be possible. Young people are encouraged to develop relationships with their peers to give them a sense of belonging within their peer group and all friends and family are made to feel welcome. A Independent Reviewing Officer said 'The home are very good at supporting contact. They have had to deal with some difficult situations and they have coped very well. My young person is very happy at the home'.

Young people are prepared for independent living to help them make a smooth transition into adulthood. Staff teach young people how to look after their personal space to help them take pride in how they live. Group tasks, such as preparing for meals and washing up, helps young people learn to be considerate of others and how to work together in a shared accommodation situation. This helps young people who may later go onto live in supported accommodation.

Quality of care

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

Staff have a very positive view of young people and focus on each young person as an individual who has strengths and the potential to succeed and achieve. This attitude is mirrored by the young people who have good aspirations to do well in their lives. Staff have come up with some very creative ways to consult with young people to give them a voice. Young people feel listened to, and see the staff as one of the best things about living at the home. All young people know how to make a complaint and feel any concerns will be taken seriously.

Young people's good care and day-to-day arrangements are supported and underpinned by detailed, robust placement plans. Young people are fully consulted about what they see as their needs, and how best these can be met. Regular reviews and evaluation of individual plans ensures young people receive the care and attention they need.

Staff have a very good knowledge of each young person's background and reasons why they live in care and this enables them to know and respect each young person's cultural roots. Young people are engaged in lots of activities to expand their own understanding of equality and diversity to embed in them a tolerance and empathy of others. Staff particularly excel in promoting equality for looked after children by ensuring the young people have same life opportunities and rights as any other young person. This gives young people a sound, solid basis to develop into successful adults.

Staff actively promote a range of activities for young people to enable each young person to grow in self belief and confidence. Activities are planned and very well organised. The staff team have a diverse skills base that is shared with the young people to give a wide range of activity choices. Every activity is seen as important so that any achievement for a young person is seen as something accomplished. This

helps young people develop their skills and life experiences.

Young people enjoy living in a homely environment that meets their needs. The house is furnished and decorated to a high standard and young people are able to individualise their bedroom to make their own space personal to them. The home's location provides in a safe area for young people, which has good public transport so young people can visit local towns and facilities if they wish. A young person said 'I am happy with my room, it is the best room I have ever had. I have all my toys and I can watch my television'.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are and feel safe and live in a secure, nurturing environment. Staff and the young people have worked very hard to gain an anti-bullying accreditation award that has actively involved the group to explore and understand how and why bullying is wrong. Robust risk assessments and regular staff training protect young people from harm, and any concerns or worries about young people are dealt with promptly. A young person said 'I am very safe here, the staff look after me'.

Young people rarely go missing. They understand and respect the house rules and know that it is important to let staff know of their whereabouts to stop them entering into risk taking behaviour. Positive behaviour is promoted to help young people learn socially acceptable behaviour and individual incentive schemes help young people take responsibility for their own actions. And promote the home's ethos that all good behaviour is rewarded.

Restraints are only undertaken as a last resort and young people are kept safe by staff having regular safe handling training. Records are kept but not all restraints are recorded fully to enable the registered persons to monitor and analyse acceptable practice. The impact of incomplete records does not significantly impact on the young people, but it may lead to instances where all measures to prevent a physical intervention are not fully explored.

Young people are kept safe by visitors to the home being vetted and safety checks being carried out on all new starters. The environment is safe and the needs and characteristics of young people are taken into account in the home's risk assessments. This ensures young people can learn about and experience acceptable risks to help them develop their own awareness of how to stay safe.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively managed to provide young people with a safe, stable environment in which they can grow and prosper. The manager and the staff team continually look at new and innovative ways to improve outcomes for young people

and keep themselves updated with good practice guidance to improve and develop the service. Leaders know their roles and responsibilities to ensure lines of accountability and an established staff team provides young people with consistent care.

Young people know how it is to live at the home and are given good, descriptive information about the home's expectations. The children's guide is in a format that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the young people, however, it has not been updated to fully inform about young people about how to contact adults who can help them if they feel vulnerable. The Statement of Purpose gives parents and social workers a satisfactory overview of how their young people's needs will be met, but there is some important information missing that will advise stakeholders about the all the services offered so they can make an informed choice when placing young people.

Regular monitoring by the registered persons allows for child care practices to be checked and if necessary challenged. Young people and parents are consulted in the monitoring process to ascertain their views about how the young people live. Where individual shortfalls are identified actions are taken to improve services to children but there is no active analyses of events to identify any trends or patterns of behaviour, and there are no written development plans to fully direct where the home aims to improve in a planned way.

Young people are care for by a committed, caring motivated team of staff who receive regular training and supervision to improve their skills that will, in turn, improve outcomes. A social worker said 'My child has done very well here. Staff have managed some difficult times very well. I cannot praise them highly enough'. All records on the home are very well organised and informative so that young people will have a detailed, accurate reference to how their lives were growing up in the children's home.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.