

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Suzanne Young
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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

The home is operated by a national private provider and looks after three young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The service offers planned and emergency admissions, and provides short, medium and long-term placements. Young people are likely to require high levels of support.

Overall effectiveness

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

The home cares for young people extremely well. Young people are provided with quality care and in turn are having positive experiences, opportunities and outcomes. Young people make excellent progress in relation to their starting points. The home provides highly personalised care which takes full account of the individual needs of each young person. Young people are kept safe and are well supported to develop physically and emotionally. They are having their health and education needs consistently met.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is well managed and with staff who are enthusiastic and well trained. Young people enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and are encouraged to behave appropriately. Staff are proactive and help young people to develop positive behaviour. They demonstrate genuine interest and affection for young people. The management team understands the strengths and areas of further development for the home. Young people take an active role in decisions being made about their futures and in the day-to-day living at the home.

One recommendation has been made to ensure that any concerns arising from an incident or restraint are referred for consideration to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for child protection.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that any concerns arising from an incident or restraint are referred for consideration to the Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection. (NMS 20.6)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make excellent progress and achieve positive outcomes. They are supported by staff to develop in confidence and self-esteem. Young people are cared for in a warm, nurturing environment with firm and consistent boundaries. They receive outstanding individualised support with comprehensive plans and assessments in place. This results in young people making excellent progress educationally, socially and emotionally. One young person commented, 'I would like to thank staff for being a positive influence on my life. They showed me different religious backgrounds and they are helping me move forward in my life'.

The home promotes an ethos that embraces diversity and difference. This helps young people to appreciate differing cultures and values. Young people are supported to become involved in different activities within the local community and attend local events and celebrations with staff.

Young people are supported to lead healthy lifestyles and to keep themselves safe. Young people engage in physical activities both inside and outside of the home. For instance, the home has a large trampoline in the garden and the manager has purchased bikes for young people and staff. Young people frequently engage in activities, such as, swimming and attending the gym. Young people regularly discuss health and staying safe issues with staff in young people's meetings and on an individual basis. Young people also attend workshops to explore issues in more depth to ensure they understand how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

Staff develop strong working relationships with other professionals to ensure young people's needs are appropriately identified and supported. Young people have the opportunity to meet with other professionals such as school nurses and police officers to discuss and explore any issues they may have.

Young people are supported to attend school and achieve in their education. Although young people living at the home are at different starting points they make significant progress with their school attendance. Young people receive excellent support from staff who accompany them to school and stay with them if this is required. Young people are also well supported by staff if they are not in full-time education. An education co-ordinator visits young people on a daily basis to provide structured educational support with the aim to re-integrate them back into full-time education. This level of support enables young people to make excellent progress and achieve positive outcomes.

Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain positive relationships with the significant people in their lives. Staff are proactive in facilitating and promoting positive contact with young people's families.

Each young person over the age of 15 years has an individualised independent living

plan which covers the Every Child Outcome areas. This assesses whether young people are ready to live independently and focuses on areas they need to develop. This helps to ensure young people are well supported and well prepared for a successful transition to independence and adult life.

Quality of care

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

Staff place the well-being of young people at the centre of their practice. They are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support young people make progress in all aspects of their lives irrespective of the challenges they present.

Young people interact positively with staff who are warm and supportive to them. One young person commented that 'from day one staff made me feel welcome and helped me with everything'. Another young person sent a thank you card to staff saying that 'being at (the home) made home life better with my mum so that's my biggest thank you'.

The home has also received compliments from parents and placing social workers expressing their thanks over the care and support young people receive from staff and for a high level of interaction and communication by staff.

There are some excellent systems in place to ensure that the views and wishes of young people are taken into account. Young people are listened to and their wishes and feelings are actively sought. They are able to influence the way the home is run on an individual basis through regular one-to-one sessions and through young people's meetings and workshops. For example, young people were able to choose the wallpaper and colour scheme for the lounge area of the home.

Young people understand and know how to make a complaint. The complaints process is clear and accessible to young people. All complaints have been dealt with appropriately by the home's manager.

Young people receive excellent individualised care in line with their placement plans. Placement plans are clear and comprehensive. They identify all aspects of young people's individual needs and include any requirements regarding culture, race, religion and gender. Staff ensure that needs relating to young people's cultural background and personal identity are positively addressed. This ensures young people receive quality care which is personalised and tailored to meet their needs. Placement plans are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that information is current and relevant. Risk assessments are undertaken to identify any areas of concern and offer staff guidance for managing and minimising the risks.

Management and staff actively promote equality and diversity. Staff organise weekly themed nights where a different country is chosen each week. Staff plan the evenings with the young people by researching the history and background information of the country. Young people and staff decorate the home and cook

traditional food. This is an excellent way of promoting the education and understanding of differing cultures and religions in a fun and enjoyable manner. Staff regularly organise trips to alternative places of worship, accompanying one young person on a daily basis to a Hindu temple.

There is a strong focus on promoting young people's physical and emotional well-being. The provider contracts the services of a psychotherapist who provides advice to staff about placement issues and training around attachment and child development. Staff work in partnership with other professionals such as workers from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service, school nurses and police to ensure young people are kept safe and health needs are met. Health information with regard to sexual health, drugs and alcohol is displayed in the home and is readily available for young people. Staff ensure all medication is administered and stored safely. Young people attend workshops and have created staying safe and anti-bullying posters which are displayed around the home. Young people are able to enjoy a range of interests and activities, such as, swimming, bike riding and playing on the trampoline. Staff regularly organise day trips to theme parks, museums and local events.

Staff are proactive in successfully promoting attendance and in supporting the educational achievement of young people. Young people are rewarded for achievement and success at school and certificates are displayed around the home. Staff work closely with schools and educational professionals and have established effective communication. Staff accompany young people to school and stay with them if needed to help support and settle them in. This has resulted in significant improvements to school attendance being achieved.

Each young person accommodated within the home is guaranteed an educational placement either within the local authority provision or through the provider's own in-house education provision. An educational co-ordinator regularly visits the home to work with young people to support them and to liaise with local authorities to ensure a smooth transition into school.

The home is pleasant, warm and comfortable. Furnishings and décor are of a high standard and any damage is repaired quickly by the provider's own maintenance team. Young people can personalise their bedrooms to their own tastes.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are good systems and procedures to ensure the safety and protection of young people. Staff receive safeguarding training and have a good understanding of the action to take should they have any concerns about a young person's safety or well-being. The Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are available and accessible to all staff. Allegations or suspicions of harm are handled quickly and in a way that provides effective protection of young people. Staff are proactive in working with young people to help them feel safe and address any safety issues such as

bullying promptly. Comprehensive risk assessments are undertaken and address all areas of concern. These are monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis.

Young people do go missing for short periods of time as the home admits many young people who display this pattern of behaviour. Staff are effective in stabilising and reducing this behaviour through developing good working partnerships with the police.

Staff help young people to develop positive behaviour. There is a strong emphasis within the home on promoting and rewarding positive behaviour through praise and through certificates of achievements. Restraints are used as a last resort. Placing social workers are notified when restraints occur and are happy with the way these are carried out. These, however, are not appropriately referred for consideration to the LADO for child protection when required. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention.

There are procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff. These ensure that all staff are thoroughly vetted before they start work. All visitors to the home are monitored. They are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitor's book. These robust systems protect young people as they ensure that unauthorised individuals are not able to gain access to the home.

The home provides young people with high levels of physical safety. Environmental risk assessments and fire equipment and lighting checks are conducted regularly. Staff and young people experience regular fire drills conducted at differing times of the day and night. This means they will be more able to deal with an unpredictable crises.

Leadership and management

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

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The manager and staff team have a clear vision and deliver excellent care for young people. They demonstrate a genuine interest and affection for young people and treat them with respect and dignity. All requirements and recommendations from the last inspection have been put into place.

Staff have excellent support and guidance through a clear management structure. The management team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home. They regularly monitor the quality of care given to young people and have developed a range of monitoring activities to improve the quality of care outcomes for young people. The home's manager has recently been appointed and is currently undergoing the registration process. He is motivated and committed to developing the service for young people. This expectation is in turn communicated to staff. The manager has developed excellent links with the local community and neighbours and has been appointed community ambassador for the neighbourhood.

The home has a clear and comprehensive Statement of Purpose that sets out its aims and objectives. A handbook is available for young people which includes information regarding all aspects of the home. These ensure that young people, staff and placing social workers are clear about the services and facilities the home provides.

There is a clear staffing structure in the home which provides a stable and structured environment for young people. The home does not use agency staff. The home uses their own bank staff to provide cover and these staff are known to the young people. This helps to maintain consistency of care for the young people.

Staff are well-supported, enthusiastic and child focused. Their development is supported and encouraged as they have access to a range of excellent training opportunities. This ensures that staff have the skills to meet the needs of the young people they care for.

Young people's needs, development and progress are well recorded and contribute to an understanding of the young person's life.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.