

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Maureen Hamer
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This is an independent children's home that is part of a national organisation and provides accommodation for an associated residential special school.

The home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people aged nine to 17 years who have emotional, behavioural and educational difficulties. The home aims to offer high quality care to young people within a homely and caring environment. The home promotes individualised care as well as the importance of boundaries and routines for young people. The committed staff team work with young people, parents and relevant partners to provide a stable placement that promotes positive outcomes.

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**.

Young people achieve stability and their outcomes improve in this home as a result of good quality care. The manager promotes a culture of respect and effectively supports staff to be aspirational for young people in their care.

The home's environment is very positive. Quality assurance monitoring is effectively used to inform priorities and there is very good feedback and engagement of staff and young people. In addition, the staff group is very cohesive and this has led to staff being able to provide young people with a consistent approach that has shown to promote positive changes to young people's behaviour. Systems are in place to ensure that staff recruitment and training needs are undertaken effectively.

One requirement and two recommendations are made at this inspection in relation to the quality assurance systems not showing the views of local authority and parents. Internet access is not available to all young people as an educational resource and staff supervision is not always undertaken on a regular basis to ensure all staff receive one-to-one support.

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
34 (2001)	ensure that quality assurance monitoring provides for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (3))	28/09/2012

Recommendations

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

- promote access to a range of educational resources to support children's learning opportunities beyond the school day such as, use of internet to support homework (NMS 8.2)
- ensure staff have access to suitable and regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people develop positive and trusting relationships with staff. Young people form attachments which enables young people to discuss events in their lives from which they develop an understanding of their behaviour. As a consequence, young people have developed confidence in themselves, take responsibility for their actions and develop positive approaches to managing negative aspects of their behaviour in the home and at school.

Young people, some of whom have been reluctant to engage, have begun to positively contribute to their care plans and progress reports. Young people's attendance at school is good as are their achievements. Young people receive support with their school based exam revision timetable. Young people also successfully seek further education opportunities to help improve their employment opportunities and to make a positive transition to adulthood.

Young people participate in a range of opportunities outside of the home such as tennis and cycling. Young people's engagement in positive activities contributes to enjoying themselves and to developing social skills such as making friends. Young

people's activities help them to develop confidence and staff state how this also positively impacts on young people's positive behaviour. This has contributed to reducing the use of physical restraint in the home.

Young people are provided with access to universal and specialist health services to ensure appropriate support including medication is provided. Issues such as gingivitis are quickly identified. Young people are supported by staff to address such personal healthcare issues with regular teeth brushing and a healthy diet. Young people respond positively to taking responsibility for their personal hygiene needs by staff using appropriate individualised incentives and encouragement.

Young people enjoy having regular contact with their family and friends. Staff work with young people and parents to promote continuity of behaviour management so that positive home visits are achieved. This enables them to continue positive attachments and relationships that support them to do well in life.

Quality of care

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

Young people have developed very good trusting relationships with staff. Staff state that they work as an effective team to support each other and to help the young people to do well by respecting their individuality and being consistent. There are occasions when tensions develop between young people and staff help the young people to listen to each other and to build positive relationships. As a consequence, young people develop confidence in themselves and respect for others.

Staff communicate well with young people. Young people have regular one-to-one sessions with their keyworker so that young people can raise concerns and to discuss their progress at school and at home. Progress reports are completed on a monthly basis and at this time progress against young people's targets are assessed. Keyworkers use incentives and sanctions to successfully motivate young people to achieve their targets.

Staff also ensure that house meetings are held on a regular basis so that issues such as menus as well as changes to the home such as redecoration can be discussed. In addition, relationship issues are discussed such as bullying. This ensures that young people work together and with staff on a range of important issues. This helps young people to learn to express themselves, compromise and to develop a sense of ownership of their home. Young people state that the improvements in the home are really good, 'I like everything about the home' said a young person. There is always an adult to talk to and we have regular house meetings.

Staff have worked with education colleagues to improve communication between the home and school. This has shown to be helpful in supporting a consistent approach to behaviour management. Information about young people's educational progress is also available. Staff ensure care plans describe actions to take to support young people's educational progress such as reading with young people. This promotes

consistency of actions and enables staff to monitor the impact of such actions against young people's targets.

Some young people have their own laptops with internet access but this facility is not available to all young people as an educational resource. The home does have a range of books available and there is quiet space to create a good environment in which young people can do their school work.

Staff provide nutritious meals for young people. Young people are involved in food preparation. Staff have recently responded to young people asking to grow some vegetables in the garden with the aim of using them in their cooking. Responding to young people's requests contributes to the positive relationships in the home. It also helps young people to feel empowered regarding affecting change in their lives.

Young people know how to make a complaint and do so. Staff respond positively to complaints so that young people feel that they are listened to and their comments on the outcome of all investigations are recorded. This helps young people to understand why some of their concerns have not been addressed in the manner they may have desired.

Staff have implemented new administration arrangements for dealing with medication to ensure the provision of controlled drugs is safe and effective. Staff have been provided with training to ensure that young people's welfare is promoted.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people say that they feel safe and they are safe. They have formed good trusting relationships with staff that enables them to discuss issues that cause them concern. Young people state there is always a member of staff that you can talk to.

Young people know that they can turn to staff for help. Staff develop effective and individualised behaviour management plans that take into account a range of issues such as environmental and emotional issues that may impact on young people's behaviour. Staff work with young people to identify the causes for their sense of anxiety and what leads to challenging behaviour. For example, staff are aware of the need of some young people to have daily physical activity as a way of helping them to burn off energy and help them to relax. Staff support young people to understand their behaviour and help them to develop approaches to manage their own behaviour. This helps to reduce episodes of challenging behaviour and enables young people to manage their lives more positively.

Staff have successfully worked as a team and with young people to reduce the use of physical restraints. The manager has very good evaluation in place to monitor use of restraints and the findings are used to inform practice. There is good information readily available to young people about the reasons when a hold might be used. Young people and staff are debriefed following use of a physical restraint to ensure

lessons are learnt and young people and staff are supported to recover from such events.

The home's culture promotes respect. Any incidents of intimidation or bullying are addressed. Team meetings frequently have the issue of bullying on the agenda to ensure that staff are aware of any issues and action is being taken to address any concerns. This promotes a positive environment in the home where young people and staff feel safe.

The home has a good relationship with the local police. The necessary protocol is in place in the event that staff need to communicate with police when a young person goes missing to secure their safe return.

All staff employed to work with young people are carefully selected and vetted to ensure that young people are cared for by suitable adults.

The home's environment is currently being improved to ensure young people live in a homely and safe environment.

Leadership and management

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

The manager is known by staff to be committed to enabling young people to have stable placements and to do well.

The culture of the home promotes a cooperative environment in which people feel valued and supported. Young people state that they enjoy living in the home and staff enjoy working there. The manager promotes evaluation of practice and fully engages staff in all aspects of the home's management. As a result, the staff state that they have ownership of actions and improvements in the home.

Staff are very proud of the progress that young people have made and state that acting on behalf of young people to ensure they access positive activities is an important part of their work. Staff state that enabling young people to access activities that they enjoy improves their confidence. 'It is so good when young people make friends outside of the home' said a member of staff.

The manager promotes a range of training for staff such as life story work to ensure that staff are equipped to work with young people. Staff are encouraged to develop a positive knowledge of young people's backgrounds, this promotes appreciation of diversity.

The manager has responded positively to previous recommendations. The children's guide is comprehensive so that young people have contact details in the event of wanting to raise a concern. The manager has good leadership skills and is also currently completing a level 5 leadership and management course.

The manager ensures that quality assurance is monitored and emerging priorities are identified and addressed. Reports are submitted to Ofsted, however, they do not include the input from local authorities and parents into monitoring of the quality of the home's services. A development plan is in place that reflects the home's priorities.

The home is currently being redecorated and having refurbishments to bathrooms and kitchen to ensure it is well maintained and homely. The manager has robust systems in place to ensure to ensure that young people's safety is maintained.

New staff report that they feel very well supported. Team meetings focus on the needs of young people and there is effective team support enabling staff to deliver good care to young people. However, whilst staff also readily access on-going support from colleagues, staff supervision is not always undertaken on a regular basis to ensure all staff receive one-to-one support.

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.