

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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 is a children's home run by a local authority. It provides care for two young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the age of 10 and 17 years. It is located in a city suburb and is within easy reach of community resources and facilities.

There is a lounge/diner, kitchen and toilet on the ground floor. On the first floor there are three bedrooms and a bathroom. Each young person has their own bedroom and the third bedroom is used as a staff office and sleep-in room. There are gardens to the front and rear of the home. Staffing is flexible depending on the needs of the young people. There is always a member of staff on sleep-in duty and on-call arrangements are in place.

Two young people were living at the home at the time of this inspection.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people remain the focus in the delivery of quality service provision and positive outcomes. In relation to their starting point young people make exceptional achievement continually supported by the staff team. Robust care planning systems are in place and young people receive individual care and guidance from staff. Safeguarding is a high priority and staff work hard with young people to promote life skills and personal development, assisting with transition into adult life. The strong relationships young people have with the manager and staff enables confidence and trust to develop; this helps secure a positive self view and supports self identity. Staff are highly committed to supporting socially acceptable behaviour and this is reflected in the reduced incidents of physical intervention. Alternative strategies show how positive results are achieved. The strong emphasis on partnership working and the strong links made with school provide the foundation for achieving success.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people achieve no matter where their starting point is. Education is a high priority and staff clearly support young people to recognise their full potential. The home actively involves partnership working to maximise this and work very closely with education support staff. As a result young people feel valued and trusted. This means they are successful and supported to recognise their own potential and achieve to the best of their ability.

The home provides a caring supportive approach, this means young people are able to form strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect. It is clear that young people feel comfortable with their own identity and are encouraged to embrace who they are along with showing respect and understanding to those who are different. Young people demonstrate their understanding of the diversity of others through regular involvement with the community and neighbours. Young people maintain regular contact with friends and family members. The home is proactive in engaging and supporting the forming of strong bonds with all those important to the young people. Link workers are fundamental and support young people to strengthen and form relationships with their parents. One parent said about the link worker 'very proactive and positive role model, young people have someone they trust and can talk to'. As a result, young people are encouraged to develop a positive identity. This means they are successful and supported to engage with the wider society.

Young people are encouraged and supported by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The home is proactive in ensuring young people take a responsible approach to keeping themselves healthy in all aspects of their life. Care plans are robust and clearly define that young people protect and support themselves to maintain healthy lifestyles. Young people attend routine appointments such as dental; vision and sexual health. Staff maintain records that provide close monitoring. As a result, young people continue to be responsible for their health and recognise the need to protect themselves from potential risk. This means potential risks are reduced and young people remain healthy.

Quality of care

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

The registered manager and staff are highly committed in their approach to the young people in all aspects of their care. Young people are supported in their education and the staff team are proactive in their approach in working with the school team to ensure education attainment is maximised. Where difficulties are faced within the education system and it is not possible for a young person to attend the environment, alternative arrangements are sought. The proactive approach and partnership working ensures young people remain central in all decision making. As a result young people are able to continue to achieve and gain positive results. This means young people feel valued and supported.

Young people have excellent relationships with the staff and know how to make a complaint. The home has a robust complaints procedure and young people can use the grumbles sheet to raise any minor concerns before they become complaints. The home has received a compliment from a parent saying 'she is the happiest she has been they keep me informed of every aspect of care'. Staff strive hard to maximise the full potential of young people and continually monitor progress, providing support and praise. Placement plans are clear and robust and provide a detailed account of the individualised care provided. Young people are actively involved in planning their care; this means they are able to recognise their own potential as a result they strive to remain in control of their life experiences.

Health needs are managed well and young people are supported with their physical, emotional and sexual health. Young people can access a range of services to support them. The home is positive in its approach to managing the physical and emotional needs of young people and strives to achieve the best possible outcome. The registered manager actively seeks resolution in difficult situations. Where young people may be vulnerable opportunities for professionals and young people to have open discussions are provided. This means young people remain actively involved in the decision making.

Staff embrace equality and diversity and this is demonstrated in the culture of the home. Young people are treated equally and fairly irrespective of their religion, race, sexual orientation and religious belief. The opportunities provided by staff allow young people to recognise their own identity, this means young people can grow with confidence, self-esteem and maturity.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and protected from harm. The home has robust procedures to positively promote safeguarding and staff are skilled and knowledgeable in the procedure. As a result young people feel safe and protected. Staffs have good links with the local police and share vital information with them when young people go missing. As a result young people are located quicker, consequently significantly reducing the risks to young people. Staff are proactive in managing behaviour and episodes of going missing. One young person has significantly reduced their behaviour through planned strategies and support. As a result the risk and vulnerability has declined, this keeps young people safe.

The home actively promotes harmony and encourages positive behaviour. The registered manager rewards and recognises positive behaviour by logging them in the sanctions book. The rewards for young people are highlighted to make monitoring and tracking easy when assessing progress. For example, magazines, make-up and CDs are offered in reward for being home on time. The staff have very good relationships with the young people, this directly reduces the incidents of physical intervention due to the respect they have for each other. Measures of control and discipline are based on establishing positive relationships and take account of the needs of each individual young person. As a result physical restraint is very rarely used and strategies are changed according to the behaviour. This means young people are protected.

The staff ensure that confidential information is handled confidently and young people's privacy is respected. All young people have keys to their own bedrooms. Staff and young people have an agreement that highlights areas that they want to be recognised. For example, staff must knock the bedroom door before entering. Both young people and staff sign the agreement. It is clear that young people feel listened to and are taken seriously. Bullying in the home is not tolerated; however, there has been a minor incident this was dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. Risk assessments are updated and support provided for both the victim and the perpetrator. Staff are vigilant in monitoring bullying and work hard with young people to manage their behaviour positively. As a result harmony in the home is maintained.

The home has monitoring systems in place to ensure the structures are safe and the practices fulfil health and safety obligations. Fire drills are carried out sufficiently and risk assessments are in place to identify and reduce any threats. Young people are confident in the fire procedures and take part in regular fire drills both day and night. The home replaces old for new electrical appliances and has recently replaced a washing machine. Gas and electrical testing is completed along with environmental health checks. This means the home is safe and young people are protected.

All visitors to the home are monitored and sign in a visitors book. Staff are vigilant in monitoring visitors and provides them with fire procedure guidance to keep them safe while on site. The recruitment system is robust and protects against potential abusers. All relevant security checks are completed prior to engagement; this protects young people from potential harm.

Leadership and management

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

The young people benefit from a highly committed manager and staff team. The home meets the aims and objectives of the Statement of Purpose. There is good development planning in place and the registered manager provides a clear focus on the needs of the service. Staff have a good understanding of the plans and are actively involved in providing their thoughts through regular team meetings. Young people are active in providing input to the development of the service and contribute through one-to-one meetings. This means the home continually reassesses the objectives set and outcomes for young people are met.

The effective management and monitoring of the home ensures that young people remain central to the focus of the home's aims and objectives. Regular visits by a designated person take place each month to monitor the quality of the service. As a result the home continually seeks to improve the quality of the service and deliver quality care.

Staff are well trained and skilled in understanding the needs of the young people. There is a robust training plan in place that enhances the skill set of all staff allowing for personal development and achievement. This consistent support provides young people with the skills to help them develop. This enhances the quality of their life.

During the last inspection a recommendation to provide the duration and effectiveness of sanctions was made. This is met and exceeded. For example the sanction book now reflects the positive rewards achieved. As a result young people's achievements are tracked and monitored. This means support provided continually assists positive outcomes for young people.

Young people have trusting relationships with the manager. This is a result of the home's strong values and management processes. The care experiences are positive and reflected in the successful achievements obtained by the young people. Consequently, all young people receive high quality care.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.