

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Michelle Spruce
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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.

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 **outstanding**.

This outstanding service is exceptional at keeping young people safe. The key strength lies within a dynamic, consistent and dedicated staff team led by a strong and highly motivated manager. The staff take full account of the highly personalised and extremely well-planned care that effectively achieves outstanding outcomes.

The staff are a real strength. The quality of relationships is professional and captures the value of respect between staff and young people that promotes mature, respectful and honest relationships. The success achieved is demonstrated through highly effective consultation with young people who significantly influence the running of the home.

The management of the home provides dedicated leadership that proactively strives to improve the service through rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting point in relation to educational achievement and attainment because they recognise the importance of education. Young people are fully committed and focused and want to succeed. Teaching staff say that young people make dramatic progress in their achievements. This means young people grow more confident and exceed expectations.

Young people recognise the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle because

they are proactive in taking steps to reduce certain activities that affect them, such as smoking. Young people benefit from a diverse range of health support agencies external to the home; this support significantly improves their health and well-being. Young people choose to access physical activities to enhance and improve fitness. As a result, young people remain fit and well.

Young people enjoy regular contact with their friends and family. Young people engage with certain individuals significant to them in their own home environment and enjoy overnight stays with friends. This means young people continue to live their lives no differently from their peers. Staff say: 'young people have become very confident with age. They make the right choices in choosing friends and are very considerate to others living in the home. For example, when choosing a film, if the age restriction is not suitable for other peers to view then the young person is considerate and will wait for the other resident to go to bed before watching it.' This means young people understand and respect others differing needs.

Young people establish trust and respect with staff because they understand their background and have a sense of identity. Taking into consideration their starting point, young people are now more confident and able to cope with emotional issues. This is because staff continually support and encourage opportunities to explore and acknowledge their own personality. As a result, young people cope well with situations that were once problematic.

Quality of care

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

The quality of care that young people receive is outstanding because staff are extremely successful in developing and maintaining positive relationships. This is due to the intricate attention to detail presented in the care and placement planning that provides staff with clear and focused objectives that maximise young people's care experiences. As a result, young people behave appropriately and are extremely courteous and respectful towards others.

Staff unquestionably place young people central to the care they provide and actively encourage and support the views and wishes of young people. The home has significantly improved the décor of the home to reflect the personalities of young people because of robust consultation and equal opportunity. For example, the lounge was re-decorated to reflect the colours that were meaningful to the young people; this includes the soft furnishings. Staff embraced and recognised the need for respecting the choice of young people and valued their decision making by enabling and empowering their view to become actions.

Staff are enthusiastic in the way they approach young people in their care and take every opportunity to maximise positive experiences. Where difficulties occur, staff are mindful of each individual's needs and act with sensitivity and compassion. Staff say, 'we are transparent in communicating with young people and communicate at a level of their individual understanding. We try to accommodate requests as much as

possible and do offer a compromise without making false promises.'

Staff are highly committed and promote a range of diverse subjects including religion and faith. Young people benefit from strong community links and make positive friendships with their neighbours. As a result, young people experience how to respect and value the cultures of others.

Staff consistently influence and drive forward educational attendance and achievement. The home works extremely well with external agencies and promotes young people's rights in regards to accessing education and having sufficient funding to secure additional support necessary for achievement. As a result, young people gain better results and improve in confidence.

Young people are happy in the home due to the excellent relationships with staff who consult with them daily. Staff support young people to raise concerns or grumbles and young people say they know and understand how to raise complaints or concerns. Young people have access to an independent advocacy service. This promotes the rights of young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Staff make young people's safety a priority because they continually assess, monitor and evaluate risk. Young people benefit from robust behaviour management plans that have successfully reduced the need for physical intervention. Young people confirm that sanctions are fair and proportionate; as a result, behaviour has improved immensely. Young people do not engage in risk-taking activities because of positive role modelling demonstrated by staff along with persistent continuity of care. Young people do not go missing any more because young people now take a more mature approach to their personal safety and understand the risks. This means young people are protected and safe.

Young people say they are not at risk of bullying because of the positive experiences they receive. However, they understand how to raise concerns in the event of bullying. The relationships in the home are exceptional. Young people interact well with each other and are respectful and considerate.

Young people say they feel very safe in the home. The robust recruitment process further protects young people from the risk of any unsuitable candidates having access to young people. Young people have keys to their own rooms, which protects their privacy and they have access a telephone to make confidential calls in a private area. This means young people are safe.

The home provides a safe and welcoming environment and regular checks are completed in line with health and safety requirements. Young people take part in fire drills and understand their responsibility in keeping their own room as well as the

home free from hazards and risk.

Leadership and management

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

The home benefits from a Registered Manager who leads and supports a dedicated and skilled work force. Some changes to the management structure mean that there is more continuity of care due to an appointment of assistant manager. As a result, other minor changes to the structure of the service have had little impact on young people due to the effective and efficient management style.

The manager regularly consults with both staff and young people to enable them to share their thoughts and view regarding the service. This helps the manager to evaluate the home's strengths and weaknesses and assists improvement. Staff receive good training and support through supervision and appraisal to ensure they engage in the appropriate training to improve personal development. As a result, young people thrive on excellent quality of care.

The home improves the service because there is a development plan that strives to tackle weaknesses and make improvement. This working document continues to evaluate how the home has strengthened development and identifies the quality of outcomes for young people. The manager monitors the home on a regular basis and benefits from assistance from another manager from a sister home who evaluates the Regulation 34 monitoring and provides feedback on improvement. This means the service continually strives to improve practice. Additionally, the Regulation 33 monitoring takes place monthly and the manager acts accordingly to any actions raised. The home has not needed to make any notifications to Ofsted since the last inspection due to the extremely well-managed support provided to young people by staff.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides a clear message of the service aims and objectives. Recently staff and young people have begun to update the document to be more user-friendly in regards to the presentation and content. Young people's views are valued because of their input into the revised document.

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.