

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	John Chivers
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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 privately owned by an established company which administers a number of other registered children's homes in the county. The home is a modern detached property situated in a semi-rural area and is indistinguishable as a children's home. The home is registered to accommodate a maximum of three young people from five years to 17 years who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Overall effectiveness

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

This was the home's first inspection under the new inspection framework for children's homes. The home is organised and managed to a high standard and affords an equally high standard of care and support to the resident young people, having full regard for equality and diversity throughout all aspects of its operation. The one recommendation set at the last inspection has been met in full and no requirements or recommendations are made as a result of this inspection. The home demonstrates marked progress and development particularly in young people's behaviour management, securing their school attendance and attainments and achievements.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people benefit from excellent staff inputs that promote their self esteem and confidence in daily life. Young people are encouraged to achieve and are praised for their efforts and this is clearly and attractively recorded in life story books and other records. Staff discuss young people's background histories with them and reinforce their past with photographs and written commentaries in their life story books. Young people grow in confidence and self esteem and young people confirm their awareness of their individual progress.

Young people have their health care needs met by staff that are appropriately trained in medication administration and first aid and have knowledge of certain disabilities and conditions. All young people are registered with a local general practitioner's practice and also have access to a range of other health care professionals. Parental consent for emergency medical treatment is held and each young person has a comprehensive health care and healthy living plan. Young people engage in a range of activities that stimulate them physically and intellectually and are encouraged to lead healthy life styles. They are being advised regarding the dangers of choosing inappropriate life styles. There is provision for the safe storage, administration and disposal of medication. Clear and detailed medication administration records are held. Young people enjoy a healthy diet that has full regard for cultural and preferential choices and they are encouraged to assist staff in shopping for provisions and assist in the preparation of meals. Young people said they enjoy the meals provided and that staff are diligent in attending to their health care needs.

The home has full regard for young people's education and learning can demonstrate young people's progress in these areas since admission to the home. Young people are proud of their achievements and certificates of achievement and attainment in subjects and activities are held. There is excellent liaison between staff and schools that young people attend. Staff encourage young people with homework and extra curricula activities from which they receive much enjoyment and gain skills and proficiency. Young people confirm the staff's commitment to ensuring their attendance and progress in school.

Young people learn how to convey their views, opinions and exercise choice via a range of communication forums. This includes one to one discussion with staff and via group meetings and also company forums that are held along with other homes administered by the organisation. Questionnaires are also used to secure young people's views on the service provided. Young people said staff listen to what they have to say and act upon appropriate suggestions and requests.

Young people enjoy contact with their families and significant others subject to agreed contact arrangements and any contact is clearly recorded.

Currently the resident young people are too young to engage in formal independence training; however staff teach and encourage them in social skills, domestic tasks and accepting responsibility for their actions.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff and have continued to develop bonds and trust. There is a sound level of communication, interaction and engagement. Young people respond favourably to staff instructions and requests and any challenging behaviour is handled in an appropriate and sensitive way. Young people's behaviour is well managed by staff that are appropriately trained in behaviour management and who are committed and professional in their dealings with them. Young people benefit from having clear behaviour management plans in place that are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Records show marked improvement in young people's behaviour and this is acknowledged by the young people themselves. Sanctions are clearly recorded and records show a reduction in their use. Young people said the standard of discipline in the home is 'just about right'.

Young people confirm their views are listened to via a range of communication and consultation forums and that staff listen to what they have to say and act upon appropriate requests. Young people's questionnaires give positive comments such as 'Staff are nice and I am well cared for', 'It's fun here and it's kid friendly', 'There's a lot of trust', 'There's nothing the home could do better'. Young people also confirm these views in discussion. Staff explain why all requests and wishes cannot always be acted upon in a sensitive and reassuring way.

Young people and their families have unrestricted access to the home's complaints procedure. Young people know how and who to complain to; however all are clear that they have no complaints or concerns about the service. Young people's help and advice lines are displayed and they have access to an independent person and the company's children's rights director. The home's complaints book shows that no complaints have been received since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from having excellent care plans in place that are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. A range of professionals and young people's parents contribute to the care plans. Young people are aware of their future plans. Young people enjoy living in a healthily environment and standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high. Young people have access to a range of services that promotes their physical, emotional and psychological needs.

Staff are proactive at supporting and encouraging young people's education and learning resulting in their marked improvement in attendance and achievements in school and at the home. Young people engage in a range of activities that promotes their interest, skills and enjoyment.

Young people learn about equality and diversity via the home's innovative and excellent approach to a range of topics and issues including talks and discussions, theme nights and use of a large world map on the play room wall. This helps reinforce awareness of different geographical countries positions in the world.

The home occupies a rural location within a short distance of town centres. The exterior and interior of the home is decorated, furnished and maintained to an excellent standard. This affords the young people with a high standard of

accommodation that is very homely comfortable and young person centred. Young people said they enjoy living in the home.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are protected from harm and abuse by staff that are appropriately trained in child protection and safeguarding. Staff are aware of the home's child protection procedures and where they can be accessed. Young people receive close supervision at all times and staff are alert to safeguarding issues. Any child protection issues are clearly recorded and appropriate support given to those involved. Currently there are no child protection or safeguarding issues in the home. Young people learn about their personal safety via their individual school's curriculum and this is reinforced by staff in direct work with the young people. There is a detailed missing persons policy and procedure and written protocol with the local police; however no unauthorised absences have occurred in the home. Young people confirm that bullying is not an issue and staff are quick to challenge and deal with it in the event of an incident. Positive behaviour is encouraged and promoted and restraint is sparingly used. Any restraint is clearly recorded and is appropriate and necessary in the circumstances described in the records. Young people said they feel safe in the home and that staff have full regard for their protection and welfare.

The home's recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and staff personnel files hold all required information including three written references and checks via the Criminal Records Bureau at enhanced level. The home's recruitment arrangements help to ensure only suitable staff are employed to look after the young people.

Young people live in a safe and well monitored environment. The home takes active steps to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from the inherent risks of fire and other potential safety hazards. No safety hazards are evident in the areas of the premises accessed.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from living in a home that is organised and managed to a high standard and affords equally high standard of care and support to the resident young people. The home has full regard for equality and diversity throughout all aspects of its operation. There are noted improvements and progress in a number of areas and the one recommendation made at the last inspection has been met in full.

Young people and their parents are given sufficient information about the home that accurately describes the service and facilities provided. Whilst some staff are limited in experience they are appropriately supervised and guided by their more experienced colleagues. The combination of staff skills, experience and competences are sufficient for the home to meet the needs of the young people and enable the home to achieve its aims and objectives. The home is adequately staffed by day and night and young people are clear who is on duty at any one time.

Young people receive a high standard of care from a well supervised, trained and appraised staff team. Staff are supportive of the home's management and ethos and confirm the home's commitment to equality and diversity. There is an annual development plan that indicates the home's viability and awareness of areas to progress and development. Young people experience a service that is diligently monitored by the manager and Regulation 33 visitor. Questionnaires from a range of people also secure their views and opinions on the service provided. The combination of these activities acts as an effective quality assurance mechanism and provides for close scrutiny of the conduct of the home. All records and systems are maintained to a high standard and confidential information is securely held in locked facilities. Notifications are promptly made to the appropriate authorities.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.