

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	9 November 2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Cray
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	20 June 2008
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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

The home is registered to provide care for eight children, of either sex, between the ages seven and 12 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home is owned by a private company.

The house is an adapted farmhouse and its location is rural and isolated. The service has its own transport to access local community facilities. The house consists of two lounges, music room, a large kitchen and dining room on the ground floor. Young people's bedrooms and adjacent bathrooms are located on the first floor. There are extensive front and rear gardens, including play equipment and a small football pitch.

The home has a school on site, which is registered with Department for Children, Schools and Families and is inspected by Ofsted.

### **Summary**

This inspection is an unannounced full key inspection visit, looking at all the key national minimum standards. The outcome groups relating to being healthy and enjoying and achieving are assessed and judged as outstanding. Outcomes for staying safe, positive contribution, economic wellbeing and organisation are assessed and judged as good.

The overall quality rating is good. The service provides a structured and nurturing environment for children and behaviour is well managed. There are clear boundaries, consistent reward and celebration for improved behaviour. Children are enthusiastic about their relationships with staff and the progress they are making at the home. Children are provided with excellent opportunities to develop both educationally and emotionally.

Two actions and one recommendation are set as a result of this inspection visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The service was asked to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place with regard to the race and culture of children. This is addressed as staff present a broad awareness of the needs of children at the home, including their racial identity. Concerns regarding the carrying out of fire drills at suitable intervals are addressed as regular fire safety checks and practices are carried out at the home. The service was also asked to ensure that all staff have appropriate training. Staff receive training according to the needs of the children living at the home. Staff files and the statement of purpose show the qualifications of staff as required from the previous inspection.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion of children's health and arrangements for medical needs are excellently organised. There are significant improvements in the health of children, including healthier diets, improved personal hygiene and development in children's emotional and mental health. Children are

supported at an early age to understand and make healthier choices regarding their diet, exercise, personal hygiene and develop confidence in visiting medical agencies.

Staff have a good awareness of medical and health issues of the children in their care and proactively liaise with local and specialist agencies, including the Looked After Children nurse, the local GP surgery, mental health services and therapeutic resources.

Medical and health records are comprehensive and clearly show that children's medical appointments are arranged, they are encouraged to attend and their health is closely monitored. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the children's medication requirements. Although administering medication is generally well managed, a central record in addition to the existing individual records and entries in the daily log, for recording medication given to children is not maintained. All staff are trained in first aid.

Healthy eating is promoted, menus are varied, discussed with children and include choice. Children say they eat more healthy food since living at the home. Diet and regular exercise positively impact on the health of children.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The safety and welfare of children is placed in high priority and children say they feel safe and understand that bullying is not allowed. Children present as happy and confident, they see significant improvements in their behaviour and are confident that staff will sort out any concerns they may have. Children are protected by clear procedures and practices for promoting their welfare and by staff who are trained in safeguarding children procedures. There are clear risk assessment procedures. The home has clear policies and procedures regarding the recruitment of staff which are in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and national minimum standards. Whilst an audit undertaken by Ofsted in May 2009 identified some shortfalls in practice, the files for the most recently recruited staff at this home demonstrate a satisfactory recruitment, selection and vetting process.

Staffing levels are allocated to ensure that all children are kept safe, receive appropriate support and are consistently supervised. Staff remain in the company of children at all times and there is a significant drop in the frequency of children going missing. Staff are fully aware of who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

The privacy of children is respected and children enjoy their own private space. There is an anti-bullying policy and strategies are documented in risk assessments and placement care plans. Children know how to complain and information is displayed in the home. The managers and staff show a good awareness about providing an environment where younger children are able to express their concerns and understand that these are dealt with quickly and fairly. Children say they feel listened to.

The physical environment is well-maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety, with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked and monitored.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a well-structured and nurturing approach to their education and care. They are provided with a variety of opportunities appropriate to their age and understanding to enjoy and achieve. Children's needs are assessed on an individual basis and their needs, development and excellent progress are recorded to reflect their individuality.

Staff are sensitive and able to respond to a complexity of need including racial identity and learning difficulties of children. Children are supported through individual key working sessions, consistent support from staff on a day-to-day basis and very good liaison with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised individual needs. Children are very settled at the home, they enjoy positive relationships with their key workers, staff and their peers. They develop confidence in their personal identities, have improved social relationships and are very proud of their achievements. Staff present an excellent commitment and flexible approach to exploring ways to best engage and encourage children. Activities including organised play, learning to play musical instruments and outward bound activities such as rock climbing provide children with a vibrant and energetic environment to learn, have fun and build their self esteem.

The home has a school on site and this facility was last inspected by Ofsted in 2008 and received a 'good with areas of outstanding provision' judgement. The head of education, manager and staff also have networks with local mainstream schools and some children have been integrated back into mainstream education. There is a strong ethos about all children attending and achieving in school. Children wear a school uniform, have clear education plans and receive systematic support and reward for their significant achievements. Many of the children have not attended the education system for an extensive period of time prior to coming to the home. The education and care staff promote excellent opportunities in education and fully support children's achievements. Children are extremely positive and enthusiastic about going to school and doing well. There is consistent reinforcement for trying hard and children talk about how well they are doing when they attend the daily meeting between the teaching and care staff.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Staff have good knowledge of the children's needs and provide consistent care on a day-to-day basis, resulting in improvements in the welfare, behaviour and safeguarding of children living at the home. Individual placement care plans provide an assessment of needs and inform staff about what to do on a day-to-day basis. Children write comments on the front page of their placement care plans and are encouraged to attend meetings about their placements. There are regular statutory reviews and children are actively encouraged by the staff to contribute. The deputy manager reviews and updates plans monthly and part of this process is to meet with each child and chat about how things are going.

Arrangements for children to maintain contact with families and friends are well-recorded and consistently supported by the manager and staff at the home. There are weekly children's meetings to discuss the running of the home.

Children are supported when they move into the home. There is a clear admissions procedure for staff to follow, including a task check list for staff and the children's guide is explained by the key worker. Children say staff have helped them to settle at the home, they understand the reason for their placements and feel part of the running of the home. There are clear processes to help children identify new placements and to leave the home in a supportive and positive way.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Children living at this home are under the age of 12 years. Whilst there are no specific independence preparation programmes children are encouraged take responsibility for domestic chores, including keeping their room tidy, helping at mealtimes and sorting out their laundry. Children share responsibility for caring for the home's pets. They are encouraged to save money and shop wisely with their pocket money.

Children live in a well-maintained and comfortable home. The lounges, kitchen, dining area and bedrooms are well-furnished, well-decorated and present a homely environment for children. There is also a well-resourced music room and extensive grounds which include an outdoor play area and small football pitch.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The home's statement of purpose provides good information about the home. Although the children's guide is informative, the style of the guide is not appropriate to the age and understanding of the younger children living at the home.

Children are looked after by experienced, competent and well-trained staff. They have a good understanding of the needs of the children and a practical knowledge of the policies, procedures and recording systems in the home. Staffing arrangements are good and sufficient in number to provide good quality care so children can progress and achieve in their placements. Communication systems are effective and there are clear lines of accountability. Handover meetings are held daily, team meetings are regular, each shift has a designated shift leader and there is an on-call system. The rota shows there is allotted time for daily handover meetings and regular team meetings. The registered manager works in addition to the staff on duty and although a weekly manager's diary is recorded, the hours worked by the manager in the home are not recorded on the staff rota.

Staff training is well organised, with an induction package, an annual training plan, with core training such as child protection, first aid and behaviour management and there is regular staff supervision. Staff are either National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 trained or will be registered on training, after their initial probationary period. Staff are positive about the support and development provided by the management team.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The staff team have a good commitment to assessing and understanding the individual needs of all children and exploring ways in which these needs can be addressed. The staff team is mixed gender and meets the current needs of the children. Discriminatory behaviour and bullying are challenged and addressed. Children have permanent and private files, which are comprehensive, well-organised and show a clear record of their individual progress.

Children are looked after in a home that is well-managed. There are clear lines of accountability. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and feel well-managed and supported by the management team at the home. The deputy manager completes monthly regulation 34 checks and the Responsible Individual delegates regulation 33 visits to managers and assistant managers from other homes within the company and these are carried out on a monthly basis.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, The Childrens Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
13	provide a central record for the receipt, disposal and administration of any medicines to any child living at the home (Regulation 29 - Schedule 6.14)	19 December 2009
29	include the manager's hours on the staff rota for persons working at the home (Regulation 29.1 - Schedule 4.11)	19 December 2009
1	ensure the children's guide is produced in a form appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the children accommodated in the home (Regulation 4.4).	19 December 2009

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations.