

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley / Ian Dickson
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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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

This is a local authority residential secure unit for up to 16 young people of either sex. It is owned and managed by the local County Council. The secure unit is situated in a small village approximately 10 miles from the centre of a large city. At the time of the inspection 13 places are allocated for use by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and three for young people placed for welfare reasons. The home is operating to full capacity.

The home is sub-divided into two units, each accommodating up to eight young people. There are a number of communal areas which include large and small lounge areas, dining areas, games room, gymnasium and a fitness suite. There are educational facilities within the home as well as family rooms, therapy rooms, various offices and conference rooms.

Outdoor areas are available, one of which is a large landscaped area split into two sub-areas providing a grassed and landscaped area beside a hard-standing court, the other outside area is for various ball games.

Staff on duty and young people participated in the inspection by talking to the inspectors and their views contributed towards the inspection findings.

### Summary

This was an announced inspection to evaluate the quality of care, education and security at the home. The inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty along with ensuring compliance with the Children's Homes Regulations.

All the national minimum standards, the additional licensing standards under each of the Every Child Matters outcomes, and the education provision were inspected. Inspectors from the social care secure estates team and one HMI education inspector from Ofsted conducted the inspection.

An architectural advisor to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) visited the home to conduct an inspection of the safety and security of the premises. DCSF has funded building development projects to ensure the home remains suitable to be used as a secure unit, namely for the refurbishment of a music studio and education facilities, the upgrade of bedrooms/bathroom en-suite facilities and refurbishment of accessible WC in the reception have recently been undertaken.

The findings of this inspection show that the home provides young people with individualised packages of care and the staff team work well together and with others to keep young people safe. The main findings of the education provision is that the education at the home is good.

The home has good links with visiting professionals to provide services to young people. To ensure consistency of practice there is a need to develop robust quality monitoring in both the care and education provision. The findings from this inspection have resulted in an overall quality rating of satisfactory. As a result, a recommendation will be made to the Secretary of State for a three year approval to be given for the home to restrict children's liberty.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The two recommendations made following the previous inspection have been met. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to obtain medical consent from a suitable person. The complaints system now includes information about what young people can do if they are not satisfied with complaint outcomes.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The home promotes healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, and holds the Healthy Schools Award. Young people engage in a variety of activities and are actively encouraged to try new sports, exercise and training programmes.

Young people benefit from well-balanced and nutritious meals. The menu offers them choices, although they have to choose a week in advance. The meals provided recognise individual needs, including cultural or medical dietary requirements. Fresh fruit is freely available to young people and they are encouraged to take plenty of drinks although there are times when water is not readily available.

On arrival, all young people are assessed for vulnerability and initial need. The GP undertakes a medical examination shortly after a young person is admitted. The nurse meets with young people to complete a medical assessment and to develop a health care plan within a week of admission.

The management of health care in the unit is good. Assessments cover physical and mental health, immunisations, disability and vulnerability. Young people and staff can access, and are supported by, a wide range of health professionals such as the looked-after-children's nurse, health visitor, dentist, midwife, mental health professionals from the unified adolescent team (UAT) and substance misuse workers.

Detailed health care plans clearly show the action staff need to take to ensure young people receive the services required. The views of young people on what medical information they are happy to share are obtained and medical information is shared appropriately. Young people's privacy is respected while receiving treatment.

Effective monitoring of health plans ensure medical treatment needed from external professionals is provided. When young people leave they receive a summary health plan which details treatments and medication they have taken and health professionals they may have seen while at the home.

A recent development ensures an effective oversight of the resources in place for first aid treatment throughout the home and includes the provision of a defibrillator and staff training in its use. A first aid trained member of staff is always on duty.

Medication administration, recording and monitoring systems are good with records of prescribed and non-prescribed medication well maintained. A clear medication audit trail is in place ensuring young people receive appropriate medication when they need it. Systems in place consider if a young person is 'Fraser' competent and completion of a medical consent routinely sought.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The promotion of the privacy and dignity of young people is an integral part of the philosophy of the home and is reflected throughout policies, procedures and practice. Staff and young people agree that young people are treated with respect routinely.

The home has a developing complaints procedure that has clearly been reviewed and improved since the last inspection. Young people are advised of their rights to complain from the point of admission, and there is good information included in young people's guidance leaflets and information for parents. These are now linked into the county's own complaints procedures and routinely monitored to ensure they are being managed effectively.

There is a good tracking guide to advise staff about the complaints procedures. However, this does not include actions to take for any child protection or safeguarding concern that might arise during a complaint.

Very positive use of restorative justice and mediation techniques is now routinely built into the complaints procedures. These are used wherever possible to solve disputes with growing success. On one occasion, a complaint from a young person against a member staff was resolved amicably and informally through the use of restorative justice to the satisfaction of the young person involved, and closed as a stage one complaint, resolved informally. However, consideration should have been given to referring this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) under the safeguarding procedures.

There are very good arrangements in place for advocates to meet young people weekly and the advocacy project leader sits in on monthly young people's meetings. Advocates from a different agency attend looked after children reviews to support and enable young people.

The home's child protection policy reflects that of the county council and was reviewed and updated in September 2009. The child protection procedure is being reviewed and updated by a working group within the centre which has yet to complete its task. Existing child protection procedures continue to be used in the interim.

Young people report that they are well protected from bullying. There is a clear policy to tackle bullying by young people or staff which includes comprehensive definitions of bullying, including racial bullying or inappropriate teasing. Staff and young people were very clear that bullying would be tackled quickly and vigorously when it was seen or reported.

There is a clear policy and procedures related to notification of significant events to the YJB, Ofsted and appropriate others. This is routinely implemented. The centre has clear procedures which are known to managers to advise them of actions to take if a young person absconds or escapes. The centre has not had an escape from within the secure perimeter.

Staff relate very well indeed to the young people. Relationships between them are generally highly positive and professional, and the staff use good interpersonal skills, good humour and sensitivity to persuade young people to comply without early recourse to sanction. The wider use of mediation and restorative justice to help address conflicts contributes significantly to the good intervention practice.

The home is committed to reducing the use of sanction and restraint to manage young people's behaviour. It has an established incentive bonus scheme in place to support young people to engage with staff and to help them tackle any inappropriate behaviour. This is a positive child-centred scheme that seeks to recognise the needs and aspirations of the young people and tries to individually tailor incentives.

Young people new to the home are placed on the 'silver' level on the incentive scheme so that the potential impact of the admission is softened at this difficult time. This is a sensitive and well thought out practice. Young people are familiar with the scheme and how it operates.

The home's managers are committed to reviewing the use of restraints and sanctions to minimise their use. There is an ongoing review to develop the procedures further to incorporate the best elements of other techniques, for example, therapeutic crisis intervention. Managers are considering how this might best be achieved.

There is a monthly review by the head of care and another trainer in physical intervention to examine the use of restraints and derive any lessons from its use. The home has CCTV throughout the communal areas. Viewing restraints and how they were managed does not form a routine part of the 'lessons learnt' process at present.

The home has introduced a quality assurance system to analyse behaviour management data each month. The system is in its infancy, and has the capacity to improve considerably. This will greatly benefit the overview of behaviour management and other practices.

The care staff robustly challenge unacceptable or aggressive behaviour from young people in order to protect the group and enable the young person to confront their behaviour safely. This may involve the use of individual behaviour plans for young people for the more serious incidents. However, the preparation and use of the individual behaviour management plans are carried out by staff on duty and not coordinated through the management team. Given that these plans may involve removal from association with the peer group and other limits on the daily routines of the young people to whom they apply, this is inappropriate.

Young people say that they are treated fairly by staff. Recording of sanction, single separation and restraint is sufficiently detailed and generally appropriate.

The home is clean, bright and well maintained, and offers young people a safe, secure and pleasant environment to live in. Immediate remedial action has been taken to rectify structural weaknesses to some doors identified by DCSF.

The county council has robust and effective selection and vetting procedures in place to ensure that all staff and those working with children are safe and fit to do so. Young people are involved in the interviewing of new staff. Staff recruitment processes protect young people.

Visiting arrangements are very carefully managed to ensure that security is not compromised and the staff and young people are protected from contraband. Checks in place ensure that those who escort young people have been appropriately vetted and criminal record checks have been obtained.

The home has suicide and self harm procedures in place which involve close cooperation with health care and psychology professionals to keep young people safe. Although the strategies

and risk assessments are reviewed weekly to ensure that they remain appropriate, they are not routinely discussed at the multi-disciplinary meetings attended by health and UAT professionals.

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

The provision is good.

The welfare aspect of enjoying and achievement is good.

Young people receive guidance and support to help keep themselves safe in the unit and assist them when they leave. They receive guidance from a variety of staff. Each young person has a key worker who takes the lead on working directly with them to ensure interventions are meaningful. Young people's comments on the care received confirmed they feel safe, have good relationships with staff and are confident they will get any help needed. They say 'I can approach any staff for support, especially my key worker, and staff will help us', 'they are good at keeping us safe and allow us to do things we are interested in', 'they explain our rights, orders and rules and take time to talk through issues and encourage us to try new activities'.

Good use is made of external providers to ensure the specific needs of young people are met. Of particular note is how the UAT is seen as important stakeholders in the work with young people and that working together benefits the young people. Support for young people is individualised and delivered in one to one sessions or in groups to address identified needs. For example, care staff, health professionals and education staff all contribute to help young people develop their knowledge on personal health, sexual relationships and their own sexuality.

The provision of leisure activities is good. Young people develop skills; improve self confidence and self esteem while having fun. There is a good range of games, books, computer games and physical activities available and young people have personal fitness plans. One young person said; 'It is great having the table tennis and challenging staff to a game'. Family members are encouraged to visit and they may cook and eat with the young person.

The enrichment programme is excellent: it raises awareness of equality and diversity and understanding of difference. Effective monitoring has considered the views of young people and their level of engagement during activities. This has resulted in changes to how the programme was delivered. The programme is interactive and covers a wide range of topics for example, knife crime, beer goggle driving, charity week (in which the young people pick a charity and raise money), black history week, military week, health discussions, drug and alcohol awareness and what life is like when you are physically disabled.

The quality of education is good.

Achievement and standards are good. Most young people make good progress in relation to their starting points. They develop their ability to function in groups through listening and following instructions. Young people learn a range of practical skills, for example cooking in food technology lessons using raw ingredients and in physical education (PE) where they develop tactical awareness of different sports and develop their team-working skills. In sex education young people learn about the importance of regular sexual health screening and different barrier methods of protecting themselves against sexually transmitted infections.

Individual records demonstrate that many young people make good gains in developing their literacy and numeracy. There are good standards of work in art and in design technology.



Accreditation successfully underpins achievement. However, the average length of stay of seven and a half weeks restricts the range of accreditation that can be undertaken. On average young people gain seven accreditations before they leave, mostly AQA unit awards of under fifteen hours. Where practical, young people gain GCSEs, OCR functional skills awards and AQA level 1 units.

Attendance is satisfactory. The recording of attendance, however, does not enable managers to monitor and analyse trends effectively. Those not coping with lessons are set work to complete in their unit. This work is not always sufficiently stimulating. Teachers visit periodically during the day to check on their progress and decide when young people are able to return to education. Due to their teaching commitments this can sometimes delay the return of young people to classes.

The behaviour of young people in education is good. In lessons most young people engage well, stay on task and work diligently. With good encouragement and perseverance from teachers, they concentrate hard on the job in hand. Movements between lessons are calm and ordered although some late starts to lessons were observed. In such cases this restricts the length of lessons. Low level disruption in the classroom is dealt with effectively by teachers.

The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers work hard to ensure that lessons are relevant to young people's own interests. In the best lessons they respond well to young people's comments and observations and exploit these as learning opportunities. There is good encouragement for individuals and one to one support enables young people to work at their own level. There is a good focus on helping young people reflect on their learning and make links to previous lessons. Teachers and young people enjoy a good rapport and mutual respect is evident. In the less successful lessons, some young people are sometimes allowed to dominate and this distracts from the learning of others. The good information and communication technology (ICT) resources available are not always fully utilised. Equality and diversity are effectively promoted. Teachers respond well to these issues in the classroom and challenge young people's views in a productive fashion. In lessons observed young people co-operate well together and bullying was absent.

Whilst the role of care staff in the classroom is clearly defined, their involvement in lessons is inconsistent. In some lessons there is good individual support and encouragement from care staff, whilst in others they are inactive. Where they remain on the periphery of the lesson they do not contribute to the efficient management of behaviour or the enjoyment of the lesson.

The curriculum is adequate. A full week of education activities are in place for over 30 hours. Lessons are of sufficient length and breaks are appropriately timetabled. There is a good focus on developing practical skills in English, ICT and mathematics through the curriculum as well as work-related skills through regular 'world of work' taster days. There is, however, limited use of the multi-skills room which means it is not accessible to all young people. The lack of suitably skilled staff further restricts its use.

Enrichment activities are good. The curriculum is enhanced through 'impact days' on topics such as science, further education, actions and consequences, equality and diversity, diet and health. There is good use of outside organisations to supplement and enhance the curriculum. Drama sessions, for example delivered by students from a local university, help young people work co-operatively, develop their confidence in groups and enjoy their education. Weekly

library visits take place in the good quality library. There are good links with the school library service. PE and fitness have a strong profile within education but drinks are not routinely available during these lessons.

Guidance and support are good. Induction arrangements are satisfactory and young people feel well supported. Baseline assessments in literacy, numeracy and in subject areas are undertaken sensitively early on during young people's stay. This ensures that good information is gathered to inform target-setting for individuals and appropriate targets are set. Monthly reports on progress are completed. Bi-weekly tutorials are in place for all young people to review their progress. Young people are placed in education provision as quickly as possible and risk assessment informs whether they can access technical areas. Whilst this is well intentioned, induction arrangements do not sufficiently consider the personal circumstances of all young people.

Connexions make a good contribution to the education provision, undertaking both group work and individual guidance on young people's options on leaving the home. Staff are pro-active in trying to ensure that education and training provision is in place for young people when they leave. They liaise with local Connexions services and other providers as necessary. Education staff attend review meetings and ensure that young people's educational needs are considered.

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

The provision is good.

The young people's needs are assessed once the young person is placed at the unit. Comprehensive documentation is kept on file to offer historical information on each young person. The young people have combined placement, care plans and health plans that identify their specific health, physical, social, educational cultural and leisure needs. Young people's files contain both information from the local authority and, where appropriate, the e-asset forms and relevant information related to their sentencing and journey through the legal process.

Staff review the progress of each young person and identify changes to meet individual needs. The placement plans of young people are subject to regular review. A clear statutory reviewing system is in place and reports available, with young people encouraged and assisted to attend their reviews. The independent reviewing officer is very positive about the professional approach of staff, how they conduct themselves, produce reports, enable involvement of young people and assist in meeting objectives set at previous reviews.

Staff are pro-active in reviews looking at planning future placements and resettlement for the young people. Staff are clear that they are responsible to help young people's preparation for leaving, which starts well in advance of any confirmed date and they seek to include assistance from the after care team of the placing authority.

The unit does not have a specific written induction procedure aimed to help each young person settle in. The young people are provided with a guide on how the home operates along with other information on admission. The young people's guide is in need of update and not produced in a child friendly format. The induction and introduction process for young people is flawed. Ineffective information-sharing and communication between the unit staff and the school staff lead to a lesson being attended by a young person new to the unit which, given their individual circumstances, left them feeling uncomfortable.

Staff encourage and facilitate young people to have appropriate contact with family and friends to retain ties with their local community. The placement plans confirmed any contact restrictions regarding access are made clear to all parties.

Staff consult young people on a daily basis and empower them, as far as it is possible, to consider their circumstances, behaviours, relationships and interactions. The young people are provided with forums both formally and informally to discuss any choices and views they may have. Young people are able to have access to specialist professionals and staff are pro-active in encouraging attendance in both group work and individual sessions. Staff strive to create an inclusive, reflective and participatory environment that encourages consultation and discussion. This appears to be effectively balanced by realistic boundaries and confirmed by young people who say staff help them think about their issues and keep them safe.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The home has clear input into preparing young people for leaving the service. The two unit managers have put together and are operating an excellent, comprehensive enrichment activities programme which was reviewed and changed in September. The programme is broad, interactive and covers issues from the five outcome areas and directly feeds into a good programme of understanding equality and diversity. The staff also ensure that through activities in the unit and education, young people are taught life skills such as budgeting, cleaning (hygiene), cooking and care of their own clothing.

Records demonstrated that transitional planning is implemented, subject to court decisions. Staff liaise closely with local authority after care teams where appropriate for those young people placed on welfare grounds or for looked after children. Plans for discharge and resettlement for those young people placed for sentencing are in place. There are no written leaving plans but arrangements can be tracked through documentation on the young people's files. There is no monitoring system in place for those leaving the unit on how effective the planned transition was.

Young people confirm they receive an allowance which can be used to buy items from the tuck shop or they can request items to be brought outside of the unit. Each young person is responsible for their own clothing and able to order new clothes when wanted or required.

Accommodation for young people is in two living areas. The home is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments and has appropriate up to date certification of checks for example, gas, electrical and fire equipment.

The units offer the young people a clean comfortable environment to live in. They provide each young person with both communal areas for group living and individualised private areas, such as their bedrooms, where they can spend time alone. Young people can choose to put up posters and pictures in their own space. Any items kept by the young people are subject to risk assessment where necessary. There are adequate bathroom and toilets. All of the bedrooms are en-suite and young people confirmed they had access to a telephone that could be used in private.

The home has several communal areas, both inside and out, and a number of rooms available for young people to meet with their families and relevant professionals. Recently carpeted and

decorated areas include the hall ways, lounges and bedrooms with an ongoing programme in place to complete the whole building.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

An executive summary of the Statement of Purpose is included in the parents/carers pack and informs them that a full copy of the Statement of Purpose is available on request. Young people say they know about the home and what is expected of them; the key worker will discuss boundaries and other things when they arrive. The home plans to update young people's and carers' information to ensure it is presented in a format that better reflects their needs.

Young people receive the care and services they need from a wide range of professional staff, both from within the home and from various agreements with external providers. Sufficient care staff are on duty to meet their needs, four care staff to eight young people on each unit and a duty officer across site during the day, with two waking night staff and at least two sleep-in staff.

The home is committed to staff training and the staff team has a good level of training in child care, for example, 87% have the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in child care or higher. Care staff have restraint training; the nurse has also been trained and will attend incidents of restraint if on site to offer support to young people and staff as needed. Child protection training and refresher training are routinely provided although records are not kept up to date.

The UAT is contracted to provide information and support; developing staff awareness of issues affecting young people and assisting them care for young people. This contract is due for renewal and is being reviewed to ensure the training provided is flexible to best meet the needs of staff caring for young people whose needs may vary from month to month.

The unit has regular Regulation 33 monitoring visits, with reports provided to the manager and copied to Ofsted as required. The visitor is clear about the responsibility to monitor how the home operates, report findings to the responsible individual and make and follow up on recommendations made. Young people have access to, and can talk with, the Regulation 33 visitor and their views and comments are taken into account.

A consistent, cohesive approach is not evident in the management of information and practice. Management oversight of direct care practices is not evident and the quality assurance processes are not sufficiently robust to ensure information provided is up to date and relevant. The system does not routinely include recommendations for developments or the process to ensure the continued implementation of these practice developments, for example a behaviour management plan used during the inspection should no longer have been in use.

The home ensures young people have access to advocates and other external professionals providing them with very good access to independent legal advice when needed.

As shown in the report the home is a well maintained environment for young people to live in. As part of the license approval process, an architect for the DCSF visited to ensure it is fit for the purpose of secure care. Recommendations were made to develop maintenance records, remove a potential ligature point and upgrade camera specification and installation were made.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Planning for care takes account of individual cultural, medical and religious needs. A young person’s awareness of diversity is raised in many ways throughout their stay, for example, themed weeks which run throughout the year and cover various topics from black history month, geography, disability, discrimination to religion and food. Traditional meals are celebrated from around the world providing different experiences for the young people.

## 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
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### Recommendations

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

- ensure the young people’s guide is appropriate for use (NMS 5)
- ensure the unit has a sensitive approach and comprehensive procedure to introduce and induct young people into the unit (NMS 5)
- review and improve the quality assurance and analysis of data related to the use of restraints, sanctions and single separation (NMS 22.11)
- review the complaints procedure ‘tracking’ guide to include steps to be taken if child protection or safeguarding concerns arise as part of any complaint and ensure that the LADO is advised of any complaint from a young person that alleges or implies any safeguarding issue (NMS 16.5; NMS 17.3)
- ensure that individual behaviour management strategies for young people are agreed with managers and detailed in full prior to being implemented (NMS 22.1)
- review arrangements for young people who have returned to the residential unit as a result of behaviour in school to ensure they may return to school when it is deemed safe for them to do so without undue delay (NMS 22, LS 4.4)
- fill teaching vacancies and the head of education post (LS 2.10)
- develop quality assurance processes including observations of teaching and learning and the collation and use of management information, with support from the county council’s education inclusion service (LS 4.2)
- further develop the role of care staff in education (LS 4.3)
- ensure DCSF recommendations made as part of approval visit to develop practice are addressed such as making safe potential ligature point, develop recording practice within maintenance books and implementing DCSF guidance on camera specification and coverage (LS 2.0)

- review the monitoring and quality assurance procedures to ensure that they are supported by clear and accessible management information systems that appropriately inform practice and development needed, enabling action to be taken to address shortfalls in expected practice (NMS 34.6 – LS 5.2 & 5.0)
- review the management and monitoring of SASH to ensure it is as effective as possible. (LS 5.0)