

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Russell Shackford
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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 service is a children's home. It provides three long-term placements for young people aged between 10 years and 17 years. The accommodation consists of three single bedrooms and spacious communal areas for eating, studying and relaxing. The home is in a village approximately three miles from the town centre. It is close to shops, leisure facilities and public transport.

### **Summary**

This was a key inspection to check on all key standards and related regulations under the Every Child Matters outcome groups for young people. This is a good service with some outstanding features. Young people eat healthily and their good health is well promoted. Privacy is well facilitated in all aspects. Complaints are handled well. There are good child protection policies, training and practices which help to safeguard the welfare of the young people.

Staff are particularly good at making sure that young people are looked after in a way that is particular to how they are and want to be. Education needs are exceptionally well met. The young people benefit greatly from the staff's efforts to promote the value of education, and encouragement of good attendance. This is a notable area of outstanding strength.

The staff work closely with other services to meet the range of young people's needs. Placement planning is good and it is well recorded and reviewed. The facilitating of contact is good. Good support is in place now to help young people learn skills that they will need for later in life. Good risk assessing and fire safety practices help to keep young people safe. Staff are experienced, well trained and competent. Young people clearly benefit from the good leadership provided by the manager to a cohesive and adaptable team. There is very good monitoring to maintain and improve the quality of care in the home. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

There were no actions raised at the last inspection. It was however recommended, that the registered person ensures that a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a level 3 National Vocational Qualification in caring for children and young people. All staff are registered on an appropriate course. The staff are provided with time and resources to complete the course, but currently the target remains unmet.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make choices about their food. The staff are aware of individual young people's likes and dislikes to ensure that they enjoy the food served. The food served is both healthy and nutritious. Staff educate and encourage young people to eat healthy foods and snacks. The staff and young people have created a catalogue of themed food menus and activities which can be used to broaden young people's palate and educate them about other cultures. The staff have a good understanding of food hygiene. This is supported by all staff holding food hygiene training certificates. Any food matters that arise

out of diversity, such as allergies, intolerance or cultural preference are particularly well managed. Young people are involved in planning meals and shopping and have access to a well equipped kitchen where they often take part in preparing meals and baking. Therefore, young people enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their individual dietary needs. They also have opportunities to plan, shop for and prepare meals.

Health promotion is a high priority at the home. The young people's health is closely monitored and record keeping is good. Staff are trained in healthcare subjects. There is detailed written guidance for staff on a wide range of young people's health and medical matters, to make sure that they understand about young people's health and what their responsibilities are. An information area around the telephone has details of local health agencies that young people can access for advice and information. Healthcare records are up-to-date and accurate, enabling staff to change their ways of working or inform health professionals and parents of the children's health progress.

The young people feel confident to speak to the staff about general and personal health matters. Specialist health workers are involved where appropriate. The home has established strong links with a variety of specialist health services, and there is much evidence of these being used to meet individual young people's needs.

Staff support and encourage individual interests in healthy activities. Examples highlighted include walking, rock climbing and horse riding. The staff have established good links and relationships with community based activity providers, such as local stables and a multi-activity course coordinator. Therefore, young people's health needs are identified and services provided to meet the young people's needs and good health is promoted.

Staff are trained in medication matters to enable them to safely store, administer and record the medication that they are responsible for. Medication is securely stored. Good policies and procedures around medication help to safeguard the welfare of young people. All staff have received training to enable them to provide first aid if necessary. Therefore, young people's health needs are well met, and their welfare is safeguarded by the home's policies and procedures for administering medicines and providing treatment.

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

The provision is good.

Details about young people's care is recorded and stored appropriately to maintain good levels of confidentiality. Young people have access to a private telephone which is free to use for reasonable periods. This ensures that young people's privacy is respected and the payment method is convenient. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of facilitating privacy for the young people. Young people confirm this is done very sensitively and safely.

All staff have received training on complaints to ensure that they know what to do if there is a complaint about the service. Young people are supported in complaining if they are worried or unhappy. Young people confirm this. Staff have explained the procedure and there is also information in the young people's guide about how to complain. Details of external agencies and contact numbers are displayed clearly. The young people also have the support of an independent advocate service. The complaints records contain the required details. Therefore, complaints are well handled.

The manager has established strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Team. An information display around the telephone area has details of local agencies that young people can access for advice and information. Staff use team meetings to ensure that everyone is up-to-date about how to promote and protect the young people's safety. Good written risk assessments support this. The provider has very good safeguarding systems and procedures for staff to follow in the event of any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The manager and staff have received child protection training. Staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to promote and protect young people's safety. Anti-bullying messages are displayed and the subject is regularly discussed at young people's meetings. There is good written guidance for staff to follow in the event of unauthorised absence. This is supported by individualised risk assessment records. Therefore, the welfare of young people is well promoted, they are very well protected from abuse, bullying and unauthorised absence, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. This is a notable area of strength.

Behaviour management plans are used. They contain good, individualised details for staff to follow when managing young people's behaviour. Sanctions are relevant and reflect the age and understanding of the young people. They are reviewed regularly for effectiveness. Physical restraint is very rarely used to manage behaviour. Staff are trained in the provider's policy and authorised techniques. Record keeping is good and there is evidence that it is monitored well.

All significant events at the home have been notified to the relevant authorities including Ofsted.

Good quality written risk assessments are recorded to enable staff to know what action to take to minimise the risk to each young person during their known and likely activities. These are reviewed regularly. The staff talk in a determined manner about their commitment to ensuring that the young people's welfare is safeguarded.

All staff working at the home have received up-to-date fire safety training to enable them to minimise the risks to young people in the event of a fire at the home. The fire safety check records are up-to-date and accurate. There is an up-to-date fire safety risk assessment. All staff and young people have been involved in regular fire safety drills. Therefore, young people's physical safety from fire in the home is well protected.

All staff have been appropriately recruited and undergone suitable Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with young people. Staff confirm this.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The staff appreciate that the individual young people may have needs arising from diversity. Young people learn about difference through meetings, events and activities. All staff have received training around equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity at the home is good. The records contain details of individual support services involved in the health, care, leisure opportunities and education of the young people. The home has very good links with a wide range of helping agencies, and the provider commissions services to fit the young people's needs. There are details of local agencies that young people can access for advice and information. Therefore, the young people benefit greatly from receiving very good individualised support appropriate to their needs.

Staff are enterprising in their thoughts and efforts to support the young people's ambitions in education. It is a very high priority and it is vigorously promoted. Staff make a lot of effort to encourage good attendance and young people are well prepared for the school day. There is space, resources and facilities at the home to enable the completion of home study or homework. A computer is available for the young people to use for educational purposes. Staff and young people celebrate achievements regularly and certificates of personal effectiveness are proudly displayed. The young people are members of the local and town libraries. Therefore, the education of young people is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. This is a notable area of outstanding strength.

The staff encourage and support a range of events that encourage participation, individual interests, and activities. Young people's involvement is supported by staff who explore their individual choices, likes and dislikes. Staff are imaginative in their approach and they review the success of their efforts. Examples of leisure activities include horse riding, go carting, rock climbing, laser zone, meals out and cinema. There is also a good range of books, DVDs and electronic games available in the home for learning and entertainment. Therefore, young people are able to pursue their particular interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged by staff to engage in leisure activities.

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

The provision is good.

The referral system enables the manager to fully assess the needs of the young people concerned, and take into account the likely effects of their admission upon the existing group of residents. All admissions to the home are planned and the child or young person and their family, where appropriate, are involved in that planning. Young people visit the home before they are placed. Therefore, young people are able to move into the home in a planned and sensitive manner.

Care plans are recorded along the lines of the Every Child Matters desired outcomes for children. The plans are well written. Focused one-to-one work is regularly undertaken to enable young people to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. The staff recordings are constructed to clearly reflect the outcome groups which makes analysis and monitoring easy. The daily records reflect the content of the care plan and the action taken by the staff to meet the identified needs of the young person. The staff's efforts are complimented by the input of a therapist who works regularly with the young people and supports the staff to follow a therapeutic model of working with them.

There is a system for reviewing the placement plans of the young people at the home. This system includes participation in the statutory reviews, internal reviews of the placement plan and informal discussions with the young person in key worker sessions. Statutory case reviews have taken place within the required timescales to inform those working at the home and others of progress made by young people. This ensures that the young people's needs and development are reviewed regularly in the light of their care and progress at the home.

Key workers monitor the care plans and produce monthly progress reports for other professionals and parents. These help to provide consistency of care and promote young people's progress and achievements that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Young people's contact is promoted and very well facilitated. Young people confirm that they can keep in touch with people that are important to them, and that they can have friends and family come to visit them.

Young people describe ways in which they are encouraged to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the home is run. This includes daily one-to-one discussion, visits from the provider's representatives and young people's meetings. Examples of changes introduced as a result of listening to young people's views include meal time routines, choices of colour and furniture and activity planning. Therefore, young people's views are genuinely sought and acted upon.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The organisation has a good independence training package which each child is encouraged to complete. Children are taught day-to-day life skills according to their level of maturity and understanding. The children learn skills through taking part in the tasks of running the home, such as shopping, cooking, following budgets and doing simple DIY tasks. They are also given help and support with social skills, laundry, clothing care and cleaning. The leaving care team are accessed at an appropriate time and pathway plans are prepared and implemented in a timely manner. Therefore, children receive care which helps to prepare them for adulthood.

The interior and exterior of the home are maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. All parts of the home are clean and there are homely touches throughout. Children confirm that they have been consulted about the way the home should look and they have chosen colour schemes for their bedroom. The garden is safe and well maintained. There is a satisfactory maintenance and repair programme for the building.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A Statement of Purpose is available to inform professionals and members of the public about how care is provided at the home. There is a good children's guide to the statement which is appropriate to the age and understanding of the children accommodated. Children receive a copy of it before they come to live at the home so that they know what to expect if they choose to live there.

There is a consistent staff team which has been added to recently to broaden the range of skills and experience among its members. New members of staff describe how they have received good quality induction training before commencing work with the young people. Staff refer to written guidance and on call help frequently during discussion and give examples of how it is implemented in practice. Management support and supervision are described as, 'excellent' and, 'one of the best things about the home' by a staff team who clearly value the beneficial contributions of the manager. Both young people and staff express the same view that, 'he has turned the home around'.

All staff are trained in a wide variety of safety and childcare subjects. An ongoing programme of regular refresher training is provided in a range of subjects to enhance the staff team's competency to meet the needs of the young people. All staff are registered on an appropriate National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) course and they are given good support to complete



it. However, the target of 80% of staff having achieved NVQ at level 3 in caring for children and young people is not yet met. The young people are receiving care from competent staff that are experienced and appropriately trained to meet their needs.

The manager has a very effective system to monitor, report and evaluate the administration systems of the home, ensuring what staff record they record well. Robust quality assurance processes are regularly carried out by people independent of the home, and any areas of weakness identified are promptly acted upon. These highly effective evaluations ensure the standards within the home, remain high. Therefore, there is effective monitoring of the welfare of the young people in the home.

Young people's case file records and other written documentation are of a good standard. This facilitates good communication with other professionals as well as ensuring young people have a permanent and secure record of their history. Good cross referencing of all documentation enables the management team and staff to evaluate and monitor young people's progress. Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and are arranged in a manner that makes them useable by staff and yet accessible to young people. The young people know that they can have access to their records. The young people's individual case records reflect their development and progress.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are particularly good at making sure that young people are looked after in a way that is particular to how they are and want to be. This is particularly evident around health, diet and education. All staff have received equality and diversity training and they demonstrate a good understanding of the subject and how they promote it in practice. Young people's cultural and religious needs are taken into account during the care planning and review process. Staff have a good understanding of individual young people's needs and ensure that these are met on a practical level. Staff also demonstrate good practice around equality and diversity through their attitude towards it and by giving examples of this in practice, such as the value of education and achieving potential. Young people have access to a team that is balanced in terms of race, age, background and gender, and have access to a variety of services in the local and wider community.

## **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 a minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff complete a level 3 NVQ in Caring for Children and Young People. (NMS 29)