

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Bill Drumm
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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 children's home provides short break care for up to six young people of either sex aged from eight years to 17 years of age with physical or learning disabilities. The local authority owns and operates this setting.

The home is a detached property standing in its own extensive grounds. It is situated a short distance from a range of local amenities. Young people have access to an outdoor play area, shared lounge, study area and dining room. The home also has a sound and light room and a training area where young people can learn to develop skills in activities of daily living. Each young person has their own bedroom and access to bathrooms with a range of additional adaptations to ensure that their individual needs can be met.

The home provides short breaks for up to forty five young people throughout the year.

Overall effectiveness

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

Young people make significant progress in relation to their starting points and thrive in a well organised, efficient and supportive environment. Members of staff provide high quality, consistent care and both encourage and support young people to develop their personal skills and abilities. Young people receive care from a highly experienced and lively staff team. The manager, and members of staff, fully understand the strengths of the home and consistently challenge themselves to deliver even higher standards. There is a committed approach to enabling young people to develop socially, physically and emotionally. Members of staff actively support the education of young people and have developed strong links with local education providers. Young people living at the home are kept safe, well and free from harm. Thorough written records are maintained, which are both accurate and detailed.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all consent forms from parents are signed and up to date (NMS 25.1)
- review the young people's guide to the home to include contact details of the Children's Rights Director and their independent reviewing officer. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people living at the home receive highly individualised help and support, which helps them to learn new things, to grow in confidence and to develop their self-esteem. Each young person has a key-worker. The key-worker system used in the home is well organised and extremely effective and helps young people to achieve their agreed goals. Members of staff are fully aware of each young person's strengths and they provide a supportive and enthusiastic environment in which young people can develop their independence and to learn new tasks. Young people are fully involved in their local community. They enjoy participating in a full range of activities both locally and a little further afield.

There is an excellent approach to promoting the health and well-being of young people. The health of young people remains the primary responsibility of their parents, however, staff members have developed extremely positive relationships with responsible medical practitioners. Members of staff display a committed approach to caring for young people and the rapport developed with parents and medical practitioners fully supports and enhances this. Young people have clear, detailed health plans in place and their individual needs are clearly identified. Young people are encouraged to take exercise and are supported to use the play equipment in the garden.

Young people receive a consistent level of help and support to learn new things and to develop their independence. Within the limits of their abilities, young people are able to bake and prepare snacks. In addition, young people are also enabled to participate in budgeting and shopping. Young people are also supported to attend to their own personal care tasks. Members of staff adopt a sensitive, discreet approach to this and support young people to be as independent as possible and to attend to their own needs.

The education of young people living at the home remains the primary responsibility of their parents. However, members of staff provide consistent support to young people in their attendance. Young people are able to continue learning whilst living at the home and to experience a wide range of activities. Young people's files contain all the necessary educational information, including statements of special educational needs and personal education plans.

Quality of care

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

The home provides a warm, nurturing and supportive environment in which young people can thrive and develop both physically and emotionally. Care planning systems used within the home are well organised, comprehensive and thorough. Detailed records are maintained and any changes in need are quickly identified and acted upon. Consistent monitoring in this manner enables staff to evaluate the care they provide and to fully participate and contribute to any reviews.

Young people's files are comprehensive, detailed and well ordered. Written records provide an extensive and precise record of each young person's stay at the home as well as the interventions carried out by staff members. Young people are fully involved in the running of the home. Regular meetings take place between staff members and young people. Young people are fully involved in recording the notes of these meetings. Within the home there is a culture of promoting young people's rights and ensuring they are able to participate in all activities on an equal basis.

The home has a thorough, detailed and individualised admissions process for young people. Members of staff are committed to ensuring each young person enjoys a positive experience whilst living at the home and is able to participate fully in all activities. Detailed assessments are undertaken to help ensure as much information as possible is known about the young person before they stay at the home. This proactive approach to assessing the needs of young people is invaluable in ensuring their needs are identified and met.

Young people enjoy living in a quiet residential area. The home has extensive gardens with play equipment which young people can enjoy. Members of staff offer practical support to young people to help them use this equipment. Each young person has their own bedroom and they are encouraged to bring mementoes with them to make their stay more comfortable. Young people have access to a computer and sensory room. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. The home also has a dining area where members of staff and young people can socialise and enjoy a meal together. In all, the home provides a comfortable and pleasant environment for young people to enjoy.

Young people are encouraged to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Individual dietary needs are fully catered for and where necessary, members of staff have undergone further training to help them understand specific health needs and how they can meet them. Each young person has written consent forms in place in order for members of staff to administer medication or first aid where this is necessary. Some of the consent forms were not specific about what the staff are able to do. The manager commented that this issue would be addressed when the young people were returning for their next scheduled visit to the home. The welfare of young people is therefore safeguarded. A record is maintained of what each young person has eaten whilst at the home. This helps to ensure young people eat a well balanced, healthy diet.

Relationships between members of staff and young people are both warm and friendly. Members of staff actively strive to provide an environment in which young people can be happy and flourish. Young people and members of staff were

observed to have a warm, friendly relationship. One young person stated, 'I like it here, I like it very much'. No complaints have been made by young people, they make excellent progress and are very happy.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

There are comprehensive systems in place within the home to safeguard young people. There have never been any occasions within the home when a young person has been missing. In addition, there are no recorded incidents of bullying having ever occurred. The manager and all members of staff are fully trained in safeguarding and receive regular refresher training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Members of staff actively promote a culture of positive behaviour within the home. Young people are supported to take responsibility for their actions and punitive measures such as sanctions and restraint are not used. Members of staff prefer to use their skills and competencies to encourage young people through reward systems and by listening to them.

The home has a comprehensive and systematic approach to risk management. Risk assessments are not only available with regard to the general building and gardens but also in relation to each young person themselves. Risk assessments are clear, focused and regularly reviewed. Young people live in a safe environment.

The home's manager carries out regular checks of the home's fire systems, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Young people take part in fire drills and the time at which fire drills take place are fully recorded. Regular checks of gas installations and electrical equipment also take place. Full written records are maintained by the home's manager.

Young people benefit from an extremely stable staff team. There have been no new appointments since the last inspection. The home operates a thorough, detailed and robust recruitment policy. This outlines the need to employ suitable staff, who complement the existing staff team. Visitors to the home are asked to identify themselves on arrival and to sign the visitors book.

Leadership and management

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

The home meets the aims and objectives in their Statement of Purpose. Members of staff provide an extremely warm, structured environment in which young people can flourish and develop both physically and emotionally. Care practices enable young people to develop their activities for daily living and independence skills. Young people benefit from high staffing ratios, which ensure they receive personal attention.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Members of staff fully understand each young person's individual strengths and needs. Working practices are both coherent and consistent in enabling young people to develop and to achieve their maximum potential. Young people are supported to learn new skills and to participate fully in how the home is run. This helps them to develop their confidence and to improve their self-esteem. The Statement of Purpose fully addresses issues of equality and diversity. All members of staff are fully committed to challenging anti-discriminatory practice. The home has a history of supporting young people's cultural needs. The young people's guide to the home does not currently include contact details of the Children's Rights Director and their independent reviewing officer.

Young people receive care from a well-supported staff team. The organisation demonstrates a commitment to training all staff and in ensuring their training is kept up to date and relevant to the needs of the young people they look after. Members of staff also take a personal responsibility for their own professional development and in ensuring they remain competent to meet the needs of the young people they look after. This is a learning home, where staff members actively share ideas and good practice.

The home's manager provides effective management and has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Problem areas which may be identified are quickly highlighted and swift action is taken. The home is also visited by someone independent of the home in accordance with regulations. Written reports of these visits focus not only on the home's strengths but also any areas of improvement. The home's manager and staff team are aware of the home's strengths and those areas that require improving and are always looking for ways to continually improve the services they deliver. There is good compliance. A recommendation made at the previous inspection has been fully acted on. Young people live in a home that is effectively managed.

The current manager is an experienced and well respected professional who provides effective and competent leadership. Staff members are motivated and actively encouraged to create new opportunities for the young people living at the home.

Equality and diversity practice is **outstanding**.