

Inspection report for Children's Home

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Inspector	Heather Chaplin
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 a modern detached house overlooking extensive grounds. It is situated within a short drive of a small town. There is access to other towns in the area and to shopping, sports and leisure facilities.

The home is managed as two separate units within one house. The ground floor comprises a lounge, kitchen and two bedrooms. The upper floor unit has a large kitchen, office, young person's bedroom and lounge. There is a bathroom on each floor.

The home provides accommodation and care for up to three young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities, including those who are on the autistic spectrum. There are currently two young women in this home. They meet up for some shared activities, but are generally cared for separately. Education is provided at the company's school, several miles away.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an interim announced inspection, with short notice. Some notice is necessary for this home, because the young people need time to prepare for visitors.

Young people were interviewed during the key inspection in August 2010, but not on this occasion because they were at school, some distance away. Parents' questionnaires were extremely positive about the home. One parent summarised the home's strengths as follows:

'Well-trained, dedicated, friendly members of staff have my daughter's best interests at heart at all times. She has made such a significant improvement...in her social skills and in her ability to engage with others appropriately'.

The Registered Manager says that the home keeps children's needs at the centre of their work at all times. There is a holistic approach, involving parents and a range of professionals in planning and decision making. Clear examples of this were seen during this inspection.

Three outcome areas were inspected on this occasion; Being Healthy, Staying Safe and Organisation. All three were found to be outstanding. No actions or recommendations were made.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection found that all outcome areas were outstanding. No actions or recommendations were made. The home continues to provide exceptionally good outcomes for young people and continually strives for further improvement.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The home achieves excellent outcomes for young people in terms of their diet and health care needs. Both young people in the home have a personalised menu, informed by advice from a nutritionist.

Parents commented on how well the home's activity programme contributes to their children's health and fitness: 'My daughter is going on regular walks and outings and has been doing swimming lessons and horse riding on a regular basis....she has healthy balanced meals and snacks'.

Young people are fully involved in planning meals and menus. Staff work hard to obtain special ingredients so that the young people can cook authentic foods which reflect their own heritage. Preparing these culturally significant foods can trigger important memories of family life. This promotes discussion and helps young people to develop their personal identity.

Young people's health care needs are very well met in this home. Staff are vigilant at all times and have identified health issues which have, as a result, been formally diagnosed and treated. All young people are registered with local doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist advice is sought whenever needed.

The last inspection showed that medicines are very well managed in this home. They are safely stored and recorded appropriately. Medicines were not inspected again on this occasion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people in this home have separate areas of the house, with their own staff. They have individual bedrooms and although there are no door locks, staff understand and respect the need for privacy. Young people may make private phone calls in line with the local authorities' contact plans.

The home has an effective complaints procedure, which is also summarised in the children's guide. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Minor amendments were made to the safeguarding children policy after the previous inspection. The policy is clear and effective. There have been no child protection concerns at the home. Staff have access to the Local Safeguarding Children Board's

locally agreed procedures.

There is no bullying in the home, because staff supervise both young people effectively and they live in separate areas of the house. Young people share some activities, where they are always with staff to ensure that no difficulties arise between them.

There are clear risk assessments in place for individual young people in relation to being absent without authority. There have been no unauthorised absences, nor notifications to Ofsted, since the last inspection.

Each young person has an effective behaviour management plan. One parent commented: 'my daughter is working well with her star chart and is very involved in identifying personal goals ...staff encourage her and praise her achievements'.

Permitted sanctions include withdrawal of part of the house bonus, or withdrawal of some TV or laptop time. If young people are uncooperative during an activity, they may return home early.

Staff avoid the need for physical intervention whenever possible and there has been only one restraint since the last inspection. Restraints and sanctions are well recorded and young people have the opportunity to talk over the incident afterwards.

The home has excellent bathroom facilities which are shared between young people and staff. There is one bathroom for each young person.

There are effective risk assessments in place for the premises and regarding risks of fire. Risk assessments on individual young people are excellent, clear and concise. These were seen at the last inspection. The fire log is well recorded and fire safety checks continue to be conducted at the intervals recommended by the local fire and rescue service. The house is very well maintained, clean and safe. All the home's equipment is regularly serviced.

Staff files were seen during the key inspection in August 2010, when they met all the requirements of Schedule 2 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. They were not inspected again on this occasion.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is not judged.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The home has a detailed and clear Statement of Purpose, which has been updated since the last inspection to reflect the registration of the manager. There is an excellent children's guide which explains in detail what children and young people can expect if they come to live at this home.

Established staff receive regular monthly supervision and new staff are supervised every two weeks. All staff receive an annual appraisal, to monitor progress and help to identify training and development needs. There are several relatively new staff in the home, all of whom are working through the company's comprehensive induction programme. Once this process is complete, they will be enrolled on National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 (NVQ 3). Established staff in the home already hold NVQ 3 or above.

The company has a clear commitment to staff training. The Registered Manager says, in her self assessment questionnaire: 'fortnightly training has been introduced for all staff, in addition to mandatory (induction and foundation) training. This has been well attended and all staff have felt that this has benefitted them in their work practice'.

The home has sufficient staff on duty to meet young people's individual needs. The Registered Manager's hours are dedicated to management tasks and she is not part of the duty rota, unless she chooses to work extra hours on shift. There is now an additional member of staff who provides extra shift cover to this home and another nearby home operated by the same company. This helps to ensure consistency for young people if there is unexpected staff absence.

The company provides an effective auditing and monitoring service through a nominated Regulation 33 visitor. This person visits all three homes in the group and prepares monthly reports. These were seen in the home and provide an effective monitoring system.

The Registered Manager conducts weekly and monthly checks on all aspects of the conduct of the home. Her reports are very detailed and comprehensive. The Registered Manager already holds NVQ 4 in the Care of Children and Young People. She has embarked upon NVQ 4 in Leadership and Management.

Young people's files were seen during the last inspection, when they met all the

requirements of Schedule 3 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. They were not re-inspected on this occasion, as there have been no new admissions since that time.