

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Cray
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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 registered to provide care for eight children, of either sex, between the ages of seven and 13 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, a 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 Education and is inspected by Ofsted.

## **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an unannounced full inspection in which all key standards were assessed. Children made a significant contribution to the inspection process. This is a good service with one outstanding feature. Children live in a nurturing and structured environment. They thrive with good opportunities to become more healthy and grow in self confidence. There are significant improvements in their behaviour. The staff present as enthusiastic and dedicated to caring for children with complex and diverse emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children say they feel safe at the home. They are protected by clear procedures and looked after by well trained staff. Children are enabled to contribute to the discussions regarding their future plans and are consulted about daily events. There are excellent outcomes for children to enjoy and achieve in their education, personal relationships and to develop as individuals.

There are two actions and seven good practice recommendations set as a result of this inspection mostly relate to record keeping.

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

The home has developed a children's guide to meet the age range and levels of understanding of the children living at the home. Ways to enable young people to access a private telephone without asking a member of staff are still ongoing and the recommendation will be repeated for further consideration and action. How staff make appropriate recordings in the sanctions book is addressed.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from living in a healthy environment they say they eat healthy food, have lots of exercise and staff look after them when they are poorly. Significant improvements in children's physical, emotional and mental health have been made. Staff have a good awareness of medical and health issues of the children in their care. They proactively liaise with local and specialist agencies, including the Looked After Children nurse, the local GP surgery, mental health services and therapeutic resources.

Children are encouraged to take more responsibility for and have a greater awareness of their own healthy lifestyles. This includes growing and eating their own vegetables, better personal hygiene and understanding how their emotional health may impact on their behaviour. While records and reviews of children's care show their health and medical needs are promoted and clearly met, the health care section of the children's placement care plans does not set out the day-to-day strategies that are in place to support children.

Staff have a good knowledge of children's medication requirements. Generally medication procedures are organised and implemented to ensure children benefit from safe practice and health needs are addressed. Staff receive appropriate training and have a good knowledge of the medication procedures in the home. However, some records do not support the practices in the home. Young people who are positively encouraged to take responsibility for their own medication do not have a written risk assessment in place. Some young people have medication procedures that have been changed by medical consultants, but prescribed administration procedures remain unchanged on printed labels from the pharmacy. Consequently, there are apparent discrepancies. Children's medication records not to always give the reason why medication is not administered as part of this medical advice. Children do not have a lockable facility to safely store their own medication.

Children like the meals and some say they give staff "ten-out-of-ten" for the food. They say the menus and healthy eating are discussed and they get some of their favourite things and eat lots of vegetables and fruit. Menus are varied and include a range of choice. Children are supported at an early age to understand how food is grown, shopped for, cooked and what is healthy. They also have opportunities to try a variety of foods from different countries and have enjoyed themed meals including food from Jamaica, India, France and Algeria.

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

The provision is good.

Children's welfare and safety is placed in high priority. Children say they feel safe at the home and are very positive about the significant improvements in their behaviour and the meaningful relationships they maintain with staff.

Children are protected by good safeguarding arrangements. They are safeguarded by robust staff recruitment procedures and staff training includes safeguarding children and behaviour management. Children are looked after by staff that have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures about promoting the welfare and safety of children. Children's safety is promoted and where necessary monitored by maintaining good working relationships with the local safeguarding children team. The manager and staff know who to notify about serious incidents in the home.

Children are protected and supported by staff that promote and implement effective risk and behaviour management strategies in their day-to-day practice. However, children's placement care plans and risk management documents lack detail about the good practices in the home. For example, while staff are fully aware of how to implement the procedures regarding children going missing, children's risk assessment and management documents are not updated. Similarly the home's proactive and transparent processes for protecting children from bullying are not reflected in the children's care plans.

There are written behaviour management policies and procedures. Staff are trained in behaviour management and physical intervention. There are clear boundaries and an emphasis on promoting incentives and rewarding positive and improved behaviour. All children spoken with on this inspection say their behaviour is improved. They are clear about what happens when their behaviour does not go so well, saying they have to do extra chores, not have their television at bedtime or have to repay money for damage they cause to the home. Children feel these consequences are fair. They are particularly proud of the praise, rewards and incentives that they receive for their efforts and achievements. Records are maintained and show good accountability for when rewards, sanctions and physical intervention are used in the home, but do not include a section to identify who is present when disciplinary matters arise or a section for young people's comments and signatures.

The privacy of children is respected and children enjoy and are proud of their own private space. Children understand and are protected by the clear written complaints procedure and information is displayed in the home. The manager and staff show a good level of commitment to listening to and ensuring children's concerns are taken seriously. There is an anti-bullying policy and children say they feel protected because bullying is not allowed and there are consequences if it happens in the home.

The physical environment is generally well maintained and monitored in terms of health and safety with comprehensive and detailed documentation. Fire safety procedures are checked, monitored and children know what to do if there is a fire.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and grow in confidence in a well-structured, nurturing and energetic environment. Children develop confidence in their personal identities, social relationships and academic achievements. They are supported by staff who present a clear and enthusiastic commitment to developing individuality and supporting and encouraging young people to enjoy and achieve in both educational and leisure activities.

The home has a school on site and this facility received an outstanding judgement from Ofsted at the last inspection in 2010. Children have an enthusiastic association with the home's strong ethos about all children attending and achieving in school. They wear a school uniform, have clear education plans and receive systematic support and reward for their significant achievements. 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.

Many of the children have not attended or positively engaged with the education system for an extensive period of time prior to coming to the home. The majority of children have a 100 per cent attendance rate, they are extremely positive about attending school and proud of their significant achievements and improvements in behaviour. Progress has resulted in some children being integrated back into mainstream education.

Needs are assessed on an individual basis and support is afforded to each young person. Staff provide individual support in individual key working sessions and also liaise with appropriate agencies in terms of more specialised needs. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and their own ways of doing things. 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.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well when they first move into the home. They are provided with staff support and are quickly empowered to understand the reason for their placements and to feel part of the running of the home. Children say they received a children's guide and their key worker explained what the home was like. There is an admissions check list and children and staff sign this together as they go through different parts of the guide. Children are supported when they leave the home with clear plans.

Children are cared for and nurtured in a well structured and enabling environment. Staff show a good awareness of the children's needs and demonstrate effective strategies to support children in their day-to-day care. Children's individual case files have comprehensive information about them and record good practice and support from staff. However the information in the children's placement care plans does not reflect this wealth of information or inform staff about what to do on a day to day basis. Records, talking to staff, visitors and children clearly demonstrate that care of the children is regularly reviewed, children are fully involved and they make significant progress. Arrangements for children to maintain contact with families and friends are well-recorded, supported and closely monitored by the manager and staff at the home.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Children living at this home are under the age of 13 years of age. While there are no specific independence preparation programmes, children are encouraged to take responsibility for domestic chores, including keeping their room tidy, helping at mealtimes and sorting out their laundry. 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. A shed in the grounds of the house is in a poor state of repair and presents a potential risk to children living at the home.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are looked after in a home that is generally well managed and promotes the needs, safety and welfare of the children. Children and others are informed about the home with an up-to-date Statement of Purpose and children's guide. Children say staff help them understand how the home is run.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Discussion with staff shows that discriminatory behaviour and bullying are challenged and addressed. The staff team present an openness, sensitivity and firm commitment to assessing and understanding the individual needs of all children. Children are encouraged to understand their own individuality and to respect and celebrate the diversity of others.

Children are looked after by competent, confident and well trained staff. They have a good understanding of the needs of the children, policies, procedures and routines in the home. Staffing arrangements are good and sufficient in number to provide good



quality care so the children can progress and achieve in their placements. There are some staffing changes and new staff have combined well with more experienced workers. Consistency of care is promoted with detailed daily handover meetings and regular staff meetings. Training is well organised, staff say they receive regular and supportive supervision and that the staff induction process is thorough.

The service is monitored through independent regulation 33 visits and monthly checks by the manager.

Each child has a permanent and private file, which is comprehensive, well organised and shows a clear a record of each young person's progress.

## 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/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Std.	Action	Due date
23	ensure that all parts of the children's home are of sound construction and kept in good structural repair, this is with particular reference to the shed in the grounds of the home (Regulation 31.2 (d))	06/05/2011
2	provide each child with a placement care plan which sets out how the child be cared for on a day to day basis (Regulation 12.1)	06/05/2011

### Recommendations

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

- ensure each child has a clear written health plan (within their placement plan) covering any specific medical or other health interventions which may be required (NMS 12.2)
- ensure a written record is kept by the home of when and why prescribed medicines are not administered to children (NMS 13.2)
- ensure children keeping and administering their own medication are assessed by staff as sufficiently responsible to do so and are able to lock their medication somewhere not readily accessible to other children (NMS 13.9)
- ensure prescribed medication is only given to the child in accordance with the prescription or instructions from the pharmacy (NMS 13.8)

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- consider how children, may be provided at all reasonable times and without reference to persons working in the home, a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private. Where arrangements regarding privacy and accessibility differ for individual children ensure this is provided for in placement plans and understood by children (NMS 9.5)
  - ensure risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed, this is with particular regard to young people going missing from the home (NMS 26)
  - ensure the home records of restraint and sanctions meet the recording requirements as set down in National Minimum Standard 22. (NMS22)