

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspection date</b>	07/04/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley / Gaynor Moorey
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Secure Unit

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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

This is a registered children's home approved by the Secretary of State to provide secure accommodation and care for up to 16 girls and young women, from 10 years of age to 17 years, who are subject to a court order on 'welfare' grounds in accordance with Section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Children aged 10 to 12 years may only be placed subject to approval of the Secretary of State.

The home comprises four individual living units with formal education provided on site. Two of the units are not presently being used. Internal and external on-site leisure facilities are available including a gymnasium, fitness suite, small external courtyard areas and a new garden area with play and leisure facilities.

### Overall effectiveness

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

This inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability for this provision to operate as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty.

Good interim arrangements are in place to cover the vacant manager's post. A registered manager from another home has been seconded to manage this home and a senior external line manager is available and supporting the manager. A consultancy service has also been engaged to work with the home to review and develop practice.

There are clearly some very good outcomes for young women. The management arrangements are temporary and the home is currently not operating to full capacity due to recent difficulties in staffing and low occupancy levels. At the time of the inspection there were five young women in residence. Although plans are in place to address these issues the present overall effectiveness of the service is satisfactory.

The home provides highly focused individualised and well-planned care, which means that the outcomes for young women are good. However, the home is not consistently addressing young people's identity and cultural needs.

The multi-disciplinary approach to care is a strength of the home. Staff have positive working relationships with external professionals to help them meet the complex care needs of young women. Young women make good progress in school raising their self esteem and confidence.

Staff have a good understanding of the vulnerability of the young women in their care and there is a clear commitment to provide a nurturing supportive environment.

All of the young women are complementary regarding their placement and feel that the home helps them in lots of ways. Young women say they feel safe and well cared for and enjoy sound relationships with staff. They feel that adults care about their welfare. A young woman stated, "I have not been here long but staff have been very supportive". The home routinely collects feedback from young women regarding the service provided and uses their comments to change what they do.

A strength of the unit is the robust safeguarding practices which include the review of incidents on closed-circuit television promoting the safety of young women. There are good working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and police department.

Areas for development include reviewing the behaviour management policy: recording the views of young women in measures of control records; providing regular supervision and support for staff; ensuring meals meet young women's needs and making the bathrooms safe for all to use.

## Areas for 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 person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
17B (2001)	prepare and implement a written behaviour management policy. This relates to the measures of control, restraint and discipline which may be used in the home and how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted. (Regulation 17.b (1))	10/07/2011

### Recommendations

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

- ensure the meals provided offer a suitably balanced nutritious diet (NMS 2.4)
- ensure staff are supported to manage their responses and feelings arising from working with young women with complex needs and challenging behaviours (NMS 3.10)
- ensure the home promotes the safety of young women. This specifically relates to the risk posed by bathroom taps that are not anti-ligature in design (NMS 10.2)

- improve attendance at school (NMS 8.3)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable environment. This relates to the young people being assisted to personalise their bedrooms safely (NMS 10.3)
- introduce elements of work-based learning in the school (NMS 8.4)
- provide all young women with the opportunity to read and add a permanent comment to the records of their separation (NMS 23.12)
- provide staff with regular supervision (NMS 19.4)
- ensure young women receive care that promotes all aspects of their individual identity. (NMS 2)

## **Outcomes for children and young people**

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

Young women constantly talk about feeling safe and cared for at the unit. Relationships with staff enable the young women to talk about the issues that brought them into secure care and any problems this may raise for them. This is alongside the work being undertaken with professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists and art therapists. Young women benefit from this support but it is clear that support is not consistently available to help them work through any issues of cultural identity.

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Young women are supported by staff to understand and learn about living a healthy lifestyle. Staff provide guidance to young women on both dietary information and fitness. Young women are able to choose their own food from a large menu. Sometimes meals that would reflect a healthy option are not cooked in the most beneficial way, for example by the use of a lot of oil which does not help the young women's diet.

Young women are encouraged to make choices about the lives they lead and are given guidance through the school, the care staff, and outside agencies about the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, sexual health and social and welfare issues.

Young women have regular access to health care professionals. Staff ensure all appointments are supported and arranged so the young women receive the help they need. The young women have health plans that clearly identify their individual needs. Young women lead an active lifestyle, including use of the fitness suite, the gym, playing sports, individual and team games.

The staff at the unit encourage the young women to complete homework and offer support to the young women's education by running activities that are interesting but also educational. Activities include outside speakers and drama/dance groups, gardening, putting on plays, thinking and discussing welfare and social issues, arts and crafts and celebration of cultural festivals which helps them understand issues in the wider world.

Young women receive good consistent support to develop their independence living skills and when risk assessed as being safe to do so can do their own washing, domestic chores, and some cooking. Young women are encouraged to help each other and keep the unit tidy.

Transitional planning is good and based on the amount of time each young woman spends at the unit. Current transition plans confirm practice and planning is excellent



and young women are involved during each stage. As a result young women are happy about their plans and confident about moving on.

Young women said they have contact with family and friends at the unit which is well supported by the staff and say 'they are able to play in the garden with their siblings which is really good'. Telephone contact is monitored and any negative calls are spoken about and young women say the reasons for any cancelled or stopped contact have been explained to them.

Young women's achievements are good. The volume of accreditation achieved is high and the qualifications gained are substantial and are recognised by employers and colleges. Virtually all young women left the home last year with some form of nationally recognised qualifications and 94% gained at least two national qualifications. Young women value the opportunities they have to gain qualifications and most work hard to achieve them. The school is successful in enabling young women to follow courses and qualifications at levels that meet their needs. Last year, eight young women gained a total of 17 GCSEs, including seven at higher grades (A\*-C). One young woman gained six GCSEs of which three were higher grades and three were grade Ds. In addition three young women who left the home before their GCSE examinations were supported in their GCSE coursework.

There is an appropriate focus on enabling young women to improve their abilities in English and mathematics. Their progress is monitored frequently and rigorously, as a result their progress is impressive. For example, young women resident at the time of the inspection are averaging an improvement of nearly one national curriculum level in numeracy each month. Last year in English, over an average stay of seven months, young women made an average improvement of nearly three years in areas such as reading and spelling.

Assessment is satisfactory overall. Good and frequent feedback is provided in lessons although with regard to marked work, there is little formal feedback provided on what young women need to do to improve.

Punctuality to education is good, enabling lessons to start on time. Attendance however is only satisfactory. It is unclear how the centre ensures non-attendance is managed with individual needs in mind, yet any sanctions are seen to be fair. Also meetings and reviews sometimes take place in school time, which, with such small numbers can lead to lessons being disrupted and on occasions cancelled.

Young women generally behave well in school and relationships with staff are professional and mutually respectful. The small amount of swearing or inappropriate language heard in lessons was challenged appropriately. We saw no confrontational behaviour during the inspection.

### **Quality of care**

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

The quality of the care is good. Young people enjoy living in a caring supportive environment. Young people have comprehensive placement plans that identify their health, physical, social, educational, cultural and leisure needs. Key-workers review the progress of each young person and identify changes to meet individual needs. Key-working staff spend time with the young people looking at and preparing review reports so they reflect the young person's views. Young people attend their statutory reviews and have input into future plans and transitions.

Staff consult young women on a daily basis and empower them, as far as it is possible, to consider their circumstances, behaviours, relationships and interactions. The young women are provided with forums both formally and informally to discuss any choices and views they may have. This can be with their key-workers or with any staff member. Staff strive to create an inclusive, reflective and participatory environment that encourages consultation and discussion. This is effectively balanced by realistic boundaries. The young women confirm they are able to express their views and opinions and staff explain why events or situations can not happen. Young people said they do not always respond well to being told 'no' but do understand the reasons for such decisions.

The home is subject to regular security, health and safety risk assessments and has certification relating to gas, electrical and fire equipment safety. The accommodation is clean and tidy and provides each young woman with both communal areas for group living and individualised private areas, such as their bedrooms, where they can spend time alone. Young women say it is difficult to have time alone if not in their own bedrooms. Young women can decorate their room with photographs and posters, however, they report problems personalising their rooms as suitable adhesive is not provided to use.

The unit is maintained to a good standard and young people have a range of communal areas to play and exercise outside and indoors. The home continues to have a rolling programme of renovation. There is a well-kept garden which the young people say they enjoy spending time in.

Teaching and learning is good. The home has adapted teaching and learning strategies well to take account of the reduced numbers of young women. Although the numbers of young women in lessons is inevitably small, the ability (and age) range is often large. Learning objectives are clear, well written and progress against their achievement is usually checked at the end of lessons. Tasks and activities are generally designed well to meet the individual needs of young women, although in a few instances work is not sufficiently challenging to consistently get the best from the young women.

Young women enjoy working hard and achieving well, especially where activities are interesting, innovative and challenging and lessons move on at a good pace. In most lessons young women make good progress. For example, in a child development lesson, young women made very good progress in discovering the benefits of various

types of nappy by carrying out a well thought-out experiment and evaluating the results. In food technology, young women produced good quality dishes and were able to explain in detail the cooking methods they had used. In an English lesson, young women analysed poetry well, after some very good behaviour management from the teacher. Whilst behaviour management is generally good in classes, the management of young women who are reluctant to participate in lessons is inconsistent and sometimes unsuccessful.

Young women benefit from good support in education. An initial assessment of young women's abilities in literacy and numeracy together with any other additional learning needs is carried out soon after their arrival. The results of this are shared with case workers. Individual education plans are drawn up by the special educational needs co-ordinator and contain appropriate targets, including targets for behaviour as well as academic progress. At present, no timelines are attached to targets although progress is monitored frequently.

More could be done in lessons to reinforce targets and their achievement. Where specialist expertise is required, this is bought in. Tracking of young women's progress in English and mathematics is strong and young people's achievements are celebrated frequently. Support from Connexions is available on request and contact is made with young women's home local authorities prior to their leaving to discuss education or training placements. Young women receive good support in lessons from teaching assistants who are effective in helping young women concentrate and remain on task. Young women have access to the internet and they complete an internet safety course at the centre. All young women are allocated a tutor and some tutorial time each week which is used to monitor progress and carry out other individual work.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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

Young women benefit from positive relationships with staff and they feel safe at the home. They feel staff care about them and state "staff help me deal with my problems". The young women have three key-workers who work on different shift patterns. This ensures there is always a member of staff on duty who knows their individual circumstances and who the young women feel they can discuss personal issues with. Advocates visit weekly providing young women with regular access to someone independent of the home which enhances their safety.

Staff have a good understanding of the vulnerability of individual young women. Regular review of risk and care and management plans by a multi-disciplinary team helps keep young women safe.

The culture of the home reinforces a clear expectation that any form of bullying is totally unacceptable and must not occur. Young women feel staff take appropriate action to address any bullying that may occur. There is an appropriate emphasis on rewarding good behaviour. Young people feel the points and reward system is fair and like having a say over the points awarded for their own good behaviour. Staff treat young people as individuals and sanctions are imposed in line with their individual level of understanding and ability. However, some young women feel that the sanctions applied for unwanted behaviour are not always fair as they feel they are not all treated the same.

Young women have new multi-media centres in their bedrooms. These are installed behind safety screening. This enables young women at risk of suicide and self harm to safely access television and music, which was not previously available in their rooms due to potential risk. However, the behaviour management policy in the home does not adequately cover access young women have to the new media centres in their rooms. For example, during the inspection, young women were able to watch television until one o'clock in the morning which does not ensure they have sufficient sleep.

The home cares for young women with some very complex needs and challenging behaviours. There have been 263 restraints in the last year. The frequency of restraint is very much influenced by the challenges displayed by the young women at the home at any one time. In recent months, staff have been seriously injured during restraints and as a result some needed time away from work. Staff receive restraint training as part of their induction and regular refresher training is provided. Young women report that they feel staff use restraint only when needed to keep the young women safe and staff do not hurt them during restraints. They are always told they can see a nurse after any restraint. Restraint records show that restraint is used to keep young women safe or prevent serious damage to property.

Dedicated measures of control books record the use of single separation in the home. These records clearly show that young women are regularly monitored while in their rooms and the reasons why they are separated. In the nine months prior to the inspection, there were 337 episodes of directed or enforced separations. Although the home routinely discusses restraints and other incidents with young women, records do not always include their views.

Excellent levels of consultation with young women take place to determine what staff can do to help them manage their behaviour. Staff ensure young women are given the opportunity to discuss incidents shortly after they occur and to see if changes to their behaviour management plans are required. The young women's views are then quickly incorporated into their individual plans to ensure all staff are aware of how best to handle specific issues young women have.

A review of the method of restraint used and the behaviour management policy in general has started. The service is looking to reduce the time young women are in single separation and are considering other methods of restraint and intervention. This is a positive development. The present method of restraint does not place enough emphasis on effective use of de-escalation and diversion tactics that could reduce the need to restrain or separate young women.

Staff displayed an excellent understanding of key safeguarding matters. All staff working at the home are provided with child protection awareness training. Effective use of closed circuit cameras protect young women. The Local Authority Designated Officer reports good working relationships with the staff at the home and that child protection referrals are made when required. Events regarding the protection of young women which includes notification to Ofsted, the Local Authority Designated Officer and Local Safeguarding Children Board and related reporting procedures are well managed by staff.

A multi-disciplinary team influences care planning and supports staff to develop strategies to care for the young women. However, the frequency of individual one-to-one supervision and support staff receive is not consistent. Due to senior staff leaving, night staff had not received one-to-one supervision for some months prior to the inspection. Due to the reduced number of young women accommodated the service level agreement with the mental health service that supports the home has been reduced. This has meant the support to the individual staff has also been reduced at a time when they have been faced with many difficult challenges.

There are good clear risk management strategies to ensure risk assessments are in place. These are agreed with placing authorities before young women are taken out of the secure environment. No one has gone missing from the home since the last inspection. The registered provider has a 'Runaway and Missing from Home and Care' protocol in place with the local police force, ensuring staff know the procedure to be followed should a young woman go missing.

A good system is in place covering the staff recruitment process ensuring no one is employed or works directly with young people without first being thoroughly vetted.

### **Leadership and management**

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

There are good interim arrangements in place to cover the vacant registered manager's post. The registered provider has seconded an experienced registered manager to cover the post until a new manager is appointed. There is also additional support from the registered provider to support the home. There is a dedicated senior manager, human resources and consultants accessible to the manager to use as required. Following this inspection, the main area to address is the review of the behaviour management policy.

Staff morale was low for a time due to the particularly challenging behaviours presented by young women; the number of staff injuries and concerns around the financial viability of the home due to the numbers accommodated dropping significantly. However, staff report being more confident about the future and that the new manager is making a positive impact and they as individuals feel well supported.

The Regulation 33 monthly monitoring visits are undertaken as required. Reports reflect and take account of young people's and staff views. Action is taken to deal with any resulting recommendations. In addition recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed. Overall effective monitoring arrangements help improve outcomes for young women.

The accommodation has a modern feel and provides a distinctive, well-planned and defined layout. The home is physically safe and appropriately secure to operate as a secure unit. However, there is limited communal space for young women to have quiet time away from the group and there is a need to update the taps on the baths to ones that pose less potential risk.

Although there is a very good focus on identifying and addressing social, emotional and mental health needs, the young women's history is not fully addressed. There are some very good examples of theme days and cooking different cultural meals. However, the home does not have a consistent approach of raising awareness of identity, cultural and religious festivals and using the opportunities presented by everyday living and events to explore these.

There is an emphasis on providing appropriate training for staff. Sixty-one percent of staff have the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and all care staff not holding this qualification are registered on the course. A review of training providers is ongoing in relation to the restraint method used and the NVQ training organisation used.

Good systems are in place to review practice. Exit interviews undertaken by an independent advocacy service help the service reflect on what is important to young women. The management team undertake regular monitoring of practice in line with regulation 34 requirements. A report on the findings of the regulation 34 review helps the provider identify trends and issues that may need to be addressed. The home has an interim development plan in place. This covers a plan to bring the home back to full capacity and ensure there is a sufficient well-trained and experienced staff group available to provide safe care and to support the

administration function in the home. The review of the use of electronic records is also ongoing.

The numbers of staff available are sufficient to meet the requirements of the home as it is presently operating. All records required to be held are available, although young women are not consistently able to read and have their comments included on the records.

Leadership and management is good in education. There is a very committed and enthusiastic group of teachers and teaching assistants who work together well as a team. The headteacher provides strong leadership and there is a shared vision for the school. There is an appropriately self-critical culture within the school as shown by the largely accurate self evaluation. This has enabled the school to know its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher has drawn up a good quality development plan for the school that highlights key strategic and operational areas for development. This is monitored frequently and has already led to improvements in key areas such as teaching and learning. The use of data for analysis and to support improvement is outstanding. As a result the capacity to make further improvements is very good. Good quality supervision is provided by the headteacher and access to training for staff is good.

The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis and communications within school and with care staff are good. Education staff have an input into young women's care plans and they attend all weekly review meetings. Some joint training for education and care staff has taken place in attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), child and adolescent mental health and safeguarding.

A lesson observation scheme is in place supported by an external partner. Whilst the outcomes of observations are recorded there are some discrepancies between the records and the grade awarded and there is too much emphasis given to teaching rather than learning and progress.

There is no evidence of graffiti and there are very good displays of young women's work in classrooms and around the home. Resources, especially the new building, are managed well and treated with respect by young women, this provides a pleasant environment. Some partnerships, such as that with the local unitary authority and schools are in early stages but are developing well.

The curriculum is based loosely on an adaptation of the national curriculum and it satisfactorily meets the needs of most young women in the home. There is an appropriate and successful emphasis on helping young women to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy as highlighted by the very good progress they make in these key areas. At present, there is little provision of humanities or modern foreign languages. A review of personal, social and health education is underway with a view to broadening the scope of this subject to include aspects of work carried out on the residential units. Inputs from external agencies are also planned. The number of PE lessons has increased to three per week since the last inspection and there is an appropriate emphasis on health and enjoyment in lessons. Vocational

provision is currently limited to child development and one lesson of beauty therapy per week. There is currently no provision of work based learning which limits experiences available to young women. External groups such as dance and drama groups increase levels of enjoyment for young women.

Equality and diversity practice is **satisfactory**.