

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pippa Greed
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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 children's home is a purpose-built complex run by a registered charity in partnership with a local authority. The home provides short stay services to children and young people who have high support needs between the ages of five and under 18 years. The home is split into two units; it provides services for up to 12 children and young people at any one time.

Overall effectiveness

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

Children and young people benefit from a home that provides a safe and comfortable environment. There is a strong and enthusiastic management team who support and guide a caring staff group. It is evident that all staff enjoy their work and this positively benefits young people.

A particular strength of the home is the child-friendly environment it provides with an abundance of play facilities and resources. Primarily the home ensures that young people with complex needs enjoy their time in the home, have fun, and maximise on the opportunities for new experiences. Staff have an extremely good knowledge of the individual needs and characteristics of young people and support them to maintain good health, mobility and develop communication skills.

Children and young people are very happy in their environment and with support of communication aids, young people are supported to make choices in many aspects of their daily life. Staff receive comprehensive training which enables them to meet young people's individual needs.

Positive feedback has been received from parents and the placing authorities in relation to the care and support that is provided at the home.

Three recommendations have been made to clarify and enhance standards or procedures.

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 review of restraint records are made and examine trends or issues emerging from this, in order to inform future practice (NMS 3.21)

- update the learning and development programme so that it demonstrates training data more effectively (NMS 18.2)
- improve the short break care plans so that they have review date prompts in order to ensure changing needs are monitored and up-to-date. (NMS 25.2 and NMS 25.3)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Children and young people enjoy their short break visits. Parents, placing authorities and staff report that young people benefit from their short break visits. Young people are cared for by dedicated staff in a secure and nurturing environment.

Children and young people receive strongly personalised care resulting in positive outcomes for their physical and emotional well-being. There is a multi-agency approach to assessing and addressing individual needs.

Children and young people benefit from a tailor-made transition to the home, which includes visiting the service to meet staff and joining in with activities before building up to tea time visits and/ or overnight stay. These well-planned arrangements mean that young people are prepared emotionally and practically for their transition into the home and this helps them develop confidence and trust in the staff.

It was clear to see that children and young people were delighted when visiting the home. They thrive on peer interaction and participate in activities of their own choosing. Parents spoken with confirmed this. Careful planning of visits enables staff to support young people to develop social skills, peer interaction, and make choices. For example, a staff member prepared communication aid for one child prior to arrival. The communication folder contained good quality photographs that are used regularly and consistently.

Children and young people enjoy good health care. The primary responsibility for supporting health care needs remains with parents as young people stay for only short break placements at this home. Medical needs are identified and reflected in individual health care plans. The service provide regular training to ensure staff are trained in complex medical skills such as administering emergency seizure medication and gastrostomy feeding. There is good level of training to ensure staff are competent at addressing young people's diverse health needs and this contributes to the enjoyment of a healthy lifestyle. However, some data is not effectively recorded to clearly demonstrate training completed..

Children and young people enjoy nutritious meals. Specific dietary needs are well presented in a file with clear guidance on likes and dislikes along with feeding guidance. Young people generally eat together around a dining table, which promotes a positive social occasion and opportunities to enhance life skills. Young people are encouraged and supported to be as independent as they are able. Young

people have made progress with communication skills.

Children and young people's educational needs are supported through key worker attendance at annual reviews. The primary responsibility for young people's educational planning remains with the school and parents. The home has good communication between themselves and educational settings. This positively benefits young people as there is a shared understanding and development of educational, behavioural and life skill targets.

Children and young people have a positive experience while away from their own home. They benefit from having peer contact in a social setting. Young people enjoy opportunities through routines, activities and outings, which all enhance their life experience and awareness. Examples of this include sing song, trampolining, using a go-kart, visiting the local park, swimming, riding on the bus and making Christmas decorations.

Children and young people benefit from well-established relationships between the service and parents. Key workers support young people to maintain contact with parents during their stay. Parents speak very positively about the service and comment, 'It is a valuable service and there's nothing else like it', 'Service is second to none', and: 'They provide a good service and staff are knowledgeable about my child's needs.'

Quality of care

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

Children and young people benefit from a good location. Young people are able to visit the neighbouring park regularly. The home is situated on a multi-purpose site and is within easy access to local amenities. Young people are cared for in a safe environment. The home is decorated, maintained, and furnished to a good standard with fixtures and fittings to assist in the delivery of personal care. Young people have their own bedroom and enjoy stimulation within a comfortable and child-friendly environment. For example, each unit has its own garden and also access to a central larger garden. Young people are able to take advantage of additional play areas within the central building such as indoor soft play area, sensory room, large lounge area as well as further outdoor space.

Children and young people receive effective and good quality care. Staff work closely with families to develop an informative plan for each child. Their individual needs are identified and presented in a concise care and health plan with risk assessment. Key workers regularly update most care plan to ensure that the home is fully aware of young people's current needs. However, the care planning process does not have systematic review prompts to ensure that all care plans are kept up-to-date.

Children and young people benefit from positive relationships with staff. The care team interact with young people using appropriate verbal skills and alternative methods of communication. This ensures that young people are offered choices in

many aspects of their lives including meals, snacks, drinks, activities and personal care needs. Young people develop good relationships with staff and it is evident that they enjoy spending time together. Placing authorities and families confirm that they are very happy with the care that is provided at the home. Comments from them include, 'They're very good with children' and 'The quality of care in my opinion, going from feedback from the children and young people and their parents are that they are all happy with the care provided.'

Children and young people are supported to express their wishes. The care team use a range of communication aids and methods. In order to enhance knowledge about the child's needs, staff also seek out feedback from parents who advocate their child's wishes and needs. Feedback through surveys from parents were overall very positive and included suggestions.

Children and young people benefit from equality and diversity. The care team is culturally diverse and care is taken to consider each young person's cultural background and heritage. The organisation also maintains links with the church and seeks volunteers who can support young people whose first language is not English. For example, the service matched a young person with a staff member who both share the same cultural background.

The service provides a good young person's guide to the home. One example seen showed a stimulating and easily understood guide using photographs and symbols. The guide explained what to expect from the home, what they can do and how to tell someone if they feel worried or concerned.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Children and young people are looked after by a competent care team. Young people benefit from the safety of the home. The service maintain good practice such as efficient child protection systems, well managed health and safety, effective health care and comprehensive risk assessments. Staff are vigilant at monitoring young people's physical and emotional well-being and respond promptly and sensitively to early signs of distress, anxiety and discomfort. This means young people's needs are well met and they feel cared for and secure within the home.

Children and young people enjoy sound relationships and interact positively with staff and others. The service promotes a positive culture of managing behaviour; sanctions are not used and there is a focus on encouragement, praise, and distraction. Staff receive regular training in an approved method of physical intervention and are knowledgeable about how to use these practices appropriately. The use of restraint is very minimal and applied appropriately to ensure young people are safe from danger; however staff do not always effectively review data to examine trends and use this to improve future practice. Policies are in place to support staff to effectively manage any incidents of bullying or young people missing from the home, however, in practice these areas do not present as issues for the

young people.

Staff receive regular training in safeguarding which provides them with the skills and knowledge to protect young people from harm and abuse. A number of senior managers have designated responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns and provide a good source of knowledge and support. All staff are aware of monitoring young people and reporting their concerns to a senior member of staff in response to an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

There are clear systems in place to recruit new staff and they do not start work until appropriate checks have been carried out.

Children and young people are closely supported by the care team and staff recognise particular vulnerabilities related to the diverse needs of those with complex needs and take steps to address these. Potential hazards for individuals and activities are appropriately identified, comprehensively documented and professionally managed, meaning that young people can enjoy many experiences with a balanced approach to risk taking.

The physical safety of the whole campus is a high priority for managers and all partners. Health and safety, fire safety, ancillary, maintenance, and security are well managed and monitored. Monthly audits are carried out by the senior manager in line with regulatory requirements. Statutory checks on facilities and equipment are carried out appropriately and staff and young people know what to do in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management

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

Children and young people benefit from a well managed care team. The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager who is appropriately supported by enthusiastic and caring team leaders and staff team. Managers keep up-to-date with new information and legislation and this is shared with staff during regular team meetings.

The service has a detailed Statement of Purpose. The information is comprehensive and details how the organisation will care for children and young people. The young person's guide is produced in pictorial format. The organisation also has a colourful and user-friendly website that provides information about the service.

Staff receive good training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the young people and the purpose of the organisation. Induction programme for all newly appointed staff includes mandatory training and shadowing an experienced staff member. The organisation employs a number of specialist trainers. Staff spoken with stated that the induction and ongoing training provided them with the skills, knowledge, and support to effectively care for the children and young people.

Staff say they feel well supported in their roles and confirm that supervision and team meetings enable them to reflect on their practice and on their relationships with children and young people. Annual appraisals are carried out in order to review staff performance and development needs.

Staffing levels are sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people. These are increased when taking into account numbers of young people, their individual needs and any planned activities.

There are various systems in place to monitor the quality of provision and compliance with regulations and policies. This includes Schedule six audits. Regulation 33 visits are carried out regularly. The monthly visits do not fully utilise opportunities to seek the views of young people, their families, and placing authorities at each visit. However, parents complete annual satisfaction surveys and young people's views are sought on activities within the home. Comments about the provision are very positive.

Children and young people's records are up to date and stored securely. Potential risks to young people and their behavioural needs are understood by the team and files contain detailed support plans and guidance on how needs will be met.

The rapport between staff, managers, children and young people is warm, friendly, and respectful. Managers have the welfare of young people and staff at heart. Staff are enthusiastic about their care of young people and enduring in their own commitment to promote positive outcomes for them.

Equality and diversity practice is **good**.