

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Pete Hylton
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This local authority owned home provides care for up to seven children. The home can accommodate children with moderate to severe learning or physical disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

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

The home provides an excellent service to young people and their parents and carers. The often complex needs of the young people are carefully assessed and catered for by a dedicated, experienced and highly caring staff team. Young people make exceptional progress in developing their skills, abilities and routines.

The views of young people are highly positive about the home. The views of parents, carers and placing authorities are also very positive. Relationships between staff and young people are excellent. Young people enjoy spending time with staff and each other. Close working relationships with parents and carers has led to significantly improved outcomes for young people.

The safety of young people is well managed. Regular checks of the home ensure that the physical environment is safely and appropriately maintained.

The registered manager is committed to further improving the home.

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 where any sanctions, disciplinary measures or restraint are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the

home (NMS 3.18)

- ensure that the guide includes a summary of what the home sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors, and how to secure access to an independent advocate. (NMS 13.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

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

All young people are actively involved in education, have excellent attendance and are making very good progress. Effective communication between the home and school ensures that the progress that young people make is shared and celebrated.

The excellent relationships between the home and parents and carers mean that young people sustain their relationships outside of the home. Young people are developing their emotional security and resilience. For example, young people enjoy more positive relationships with their families and in some cases, are able to return home sooner than planned. In some cases, there has been exceptionally good progress with young people developing positive routines. This, in turn, has enabled families to use these routines at home to further enhance the progress that young people make.

The health needs of young people are identified and addressed. Where young people have complex medical conditions, the home works closely with families and specialist services to ensure that these needs are met. Young people are making very good progress with healthy eating. All young people have their dietary needs met by the home and enjoy a wide selection of healthy foods. This has led to improved outcomes in young people's health.

Young people are fully supported in expressing their opinions, feelings and wishes. Regular young people's meetings discuss a range of relevant matters and ensure that all young people are included in decisions made about activities, food choices and ideas about improving the home. A range of communication methods are used by the staff and these ensure that all young people are able to participate.

Young people are encouraged, where appropriate, to develop their independence. A small kitchen area is designed specifically for young people to practice preparing and cooking meals and snacks. This means that young people start to develop the necessary skills for adulthood.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy access to a wide range of activities and experiences. The staff team work hard to ensure that young people are able to access the community,

irrespective of the barriers that the young people face. For example, where young people have mobility issues, the staff team ensure that young people are still able to access the activity. This has enabled young people to take part in new activities. For example, young people are now accessing holidays to the coast.

The home has excellent relationships with the placing authority. A social worker commented that, 'communication between us and the staff is excellent.' Effective partnership working means that all relevant information is shared between the home and placing authorities. This means that the progress of young people is effectively monitored. Furthermore, staff have excellent relationships with families and this has promoted improved outcomes for young people. For example, the staff team have supported sibling groups with learning communication methods. This means that families are now communicating more effectively. Staff at the home are supportive to parents and carers. The staff team work closely with families to support improved outcomes. Where young people find it hard to follow bedtime routines, staff work closely with parents to provide advice, guidance and support.

Care plans are highly detailed, individualised and regularly updated. The often complex needs of young people are thoroughly assessed. Furthermore, care plans are very clear in how care is to be provided. This ensures that all staff are consistent and the needs of young people are met. Where young people are not able to communicate their needs, wishes or preferences, the home works closely with parents, previous placements and placing authorities to identify suitable care interventions. Where young people are able to express views about their care, these are fully explored and embedded into care plans.

Young people surveys returned to Ofsted are highly positive. Furthermore, young people at the home were observed to be happy, relaxed and enjoying spending time with staff and their peers. A young person commented that the home was very nice and that they were happy. Parents and carers have equally positive views. A parent commented that the home was 'absolutely amazing, they have done so much to help us.' Another parent commented that, 'the staff are brilliant. They really look after the children and they work with me to make sure everything is ok.' Complaints from young people, families or other professionals are rare. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people are supported to make complaints if they wish to do so. A young person's guide details how young people can raise a concern if they are worried about anything. However, this guide does not contain the contact numbers for Ofsted or the Children's Rights Director.

The individual cultural requirements of young people are fully identified and planned for. Where young people follow a religion, they are encouraged and supported to maintain their faith. Furthermore, the staff team have produced age appropriate literature about different religions and beliefs. This information is written in an accessible manner. This ensures that all young people are able to learn about different religions. Regular theme nights take place at the home and young people enjoy eating a wide variety of different foods. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to maintain their individual identity and staff ensure that the needs and wishes of young people are at the centre of the care that they provide. The staff

team are highly skilled and knowledgeable about the young people in the home. A social worker commented that the, 'breadth of skills and knowledge in the staff team is excellent.'

Medication is safely stored and administered. The often complex health needs of the young people are catered for by a well trained staff team. This means that young people benefit from a staff team that is responsive to their medical needs. This is further enhanced through effective partnership working with medical specialists. The staff team now regularly liaise with a specialist doctor who regularly visits the home and oversees the health needs of all young people.

Young people benefit from food that is prepared by professional catering staff. The preferences of young people are fully considered in the planning of the menus. All food given to young people is healthy, nutritious and varied. Mealtimes are a social occasion in the home and young people enjoy sitting with staff and are encouraged to socialise with their peers. Similarly, young people enjoy spending time with each other in the different areas of the home. A large garden is well equipped with appropriate play equipment and a gazebo has been utilised as a sensory area for young people to relax and play. The interior of the home is well presented and appropriate to the needs of the young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe at the home. Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviour and no young people are at risk of harm. Young people do not go missing from the home and any serious incidents, for example young people needing hospital treatment, are appropriately handled and notified to the relevant bodies.

Restraint is rarely used in the home. Where restraint does occur, it is appropriately recorded and monitored. Young people are encouraged to share their views and feelings after restraint. The provision of alternative communication methods, for example sign language, symbols and picture books, ensures that all young people are able to convey their feelings. This means that young people feel listened to and respected. Sanctions are seldom applied in the home. There has been one sanction since the last inspection. This sanction was given for appropriate reasons. However, the views of the young person were not recorded in records kept by the home although these views were sought; this did not negatively impact on outcomes for young people. A social worker commented that the home uses, 'excellent behaviour management with young people.'

The safety of young people is further promoted by careful selection and vetting of staff. All staff are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures. This ensures that only suitable adults work with young people. The manager regularly supervises staff and also spends time working alongside staff with the young people. This enables the manager to observe staff practice and also seek the views of the young people. This

further adds to the safe atmosphere as the manager is able to discuss practice with staff and further secure improvement.

All young people have highly detailed risk assessments in place. This means that the individual vulnerabilities of young people are identified and appropriately managed. These risk assessments are regularly updated and reviewed. Concerns about young people are effectively acted upon. The staff team are responsive to the needs and vulnerabilities of young people. The staff team ensure that all young people know how to safely evacuate in the event of fire. Regular fire drills take place and young people are supported in safely and swiftly evacuating the home. These drills take place at various times of the day and in the evening. This ensures that all young people are well practised in the fire drill. This further adds to their safety and well-being in the home.

The physical layout of the home is spacious and regularly checked to ensure that it is safe. The use of automatic door closers means that all doors are kept open. Young people are able to move freely around the home. Staff closely monitor the young people and support them where necessary. A large enclosed garden means that young people can spend time on their own and also with peers. Young people are safe in the home.

Leadership and management

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

Young people benefit from a home that is effectively managed. An experienced and capable manager ensures that the home is robustly monitored. The manager ensures that all records are regularly checked. Where a shortfall or weakness is identified, the manager ensures that remedial action is taken. In addition to the manager's own monitoring, the home is regularly visited by the organisation. These visits ensure that the home is regularly monitored and weaknesses identified and acted upon.

The home's development plan clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the home. This document identifies targets for the development of the service and is regularly updated and reviewed. This means that young people benefit from a home that is continually striving to improve the standard of care. The two recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed and fully met. All staff are now either working towards or hold the appropriate level of qualification. The manager has also improved the system in the home for notifying Ofsted of serious events in the home.

The home's Statement of Purpose is up to date and contains all required information. The home is meeting its aims and objectives and continues to provide an excellent quality of care to young people.

The manager has ensured that the staff team are kept up to date with current developments in childcare practice. Regular staff meetings discuss topics of relevance, in addition to discussing the needs and progress of young people.

The manager is knowledgeable about the needs of young people and is committed to securing improved outcomes for young people. The manager regularly works alongside staff to ensure that the quality of care is maintained and any concerns about young people are identified. This further aids the manager's knowledge of the progress that young people make. Staff supervision is effective and ensures that all staff are regularly supervised. Staff have positive views about the quality of the management and their supervision and appraisal arrangements. This means that young people are cared for by a staff team who are effectively supervised and monitored in their duties. Furthermore, the staff team are stable and committed.

The home is well maintained. The manager ensures that all required checks on gas and electrical equipment are up to date. The health and safety of young people is fully promoted through regular audits of the home. Furthermore, recent decoration of the home has made the environment brighter and more homely.

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.