

## Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Paula Lahey
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<b>Provision subtype</b>	Children's home

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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

The service is run by an established private provider. The home is registered to provide medium to long term care and accommodation for up to four young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is managed as two separate units within one house.

The registered provider bases its practices on the integration of home, education and therapeutic services working together to meet the needs of the child. Young people living in the home can attend a school also run by the provider and have access to in-house therapeutic support.

### 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**.

All young people have made exceptional progress during their placement. Educational attendance and attainment far exceeds expectations and young people do not engage in any risk taking or offending behaviours. Young people's self-esteem, confidence and independence skills have significantly increased.

A major strength of the provision is the incredibly positive and constructive attachments that have developed between young people and their carers. These relationships are key to the success of young people's placement and subsequent achievements. Young people report feeling loved and cared for; they value and respect carers' opinions and understand that they are concerned for their well-being.

Young people receive highly personalised care within a very positive, nurturing and child-centred environment. The staff team are ambitious for young people and want them to get the very best from their placement. Staff are experienced in assessing individual needs and provide personalised care that meets the complex needs of each young person.

Young people are very happy in this home. They display genuine care, consideration

and courtesy for each other, resulting in good relationships and strong feelings of safety and security. Young people are consulted regularly about the support they receive and their views are intrinsically woven through their placement plan and supporting documents.

Safeguarding arrangements are clear and effective. Young people's well-being and security is assured by diligent and experienced staff who ensure safe working practices are meticulously implemented. As a result young people feel protected and nurtured.

Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for young people. They are well-informed of all the necessary legislation and requirements to maintain the smooth running and on-going development of the home. There are comprehensive aims for the service and each young person's placement. These are successfully translated into practice and are exceeded in many ways, especially in relation to outcomes for young people. Placing authorities and parents agree with this and comments include: 'I am so grateful for the support, love and encouragement my daughter has had and is still receiving. Without this home's input she would not have achieved what she has or developed into this lovely caring teenager. With staff support I have developed a much closer bond with my daughter.'

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

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

Young people have developed a very good understanding of their cultural heritage and background. They engage well with carers and specialists and make excellent use of support and guidance to learn how to manage feelings and emotions in a mature and considered way. Young people's self-esteem and confidence in their abilities has significantly increased. They demonstrate a more positive view of themselves and can recognise their many achievements. Over this past year young people have been able to assert their views in a positive and constructive manner, both towards friends and family, and during formal planning meetings.

Young people benefit from spending time regularly with those who are significant to them. Carers have an excellent understanding of the benefits of young people sustaining positive contact and strongly advocate to ensure interactions are constructive. With support, young people have made good choices in their friendships with peers. As a result they have made and sustained positive interactions which have had a beneficial impact on their self-esteem and personal aspirations.

Young people have developed a positive view of education and all have positive goals and aspirations for their future. They have excellent attendance at school and demonstrate a commitment to engaging with learning opportunities. All young people have made significant progress towards their individual education plan, including increasing their levels in core subjects and improving their literacy skills.

Young people are on course to leave school with recognised qualifications and awards that those who know them well previously did not think possible. Some young people have been offered places at further education establishments due to the confidence they demonstrated in interview and their personal educational attainments. All young people have received positive reports from school about their ability, progress, behaviour and attendance. One young person has been awarded a significant number of commendations relating to these areas.

Young people take responsibility for their health and safety in a mature manner. They make sensible choices at mealtimes and all understand the importance of regular exercise. Young people do not engage in behaviours that compromise their well-being or health. Young people are prepared well for adult life. Independence plans are incremental and take account of young people's individual abilities and level of confidence. Young people successfully manage personal budgets, regularly cook for each other and take responsibility for laundry and keeping their personal area clean and tidy. Young people have developed confidence in travelling independently in the local community and use these skills to meet with friends and family.

Young people have a strong affiliation to the home, carers and each other. Young people say they feel loved, valued and cared for. They have developed great trust in carers and have the confidence to speak openly with them about any issues that cause anxiety or unhappiness. Young people participate well in group and individual meetings; their views have influenced development plans and improvements made to the environment of the home. Young people are assured that their views are heard, valued and acted upon.

Young people are proud of their achievements and can describe progress they have made since coming to live in the home. They feel that they have achieved well due to the excellent support and guidance they receive. Placing authorities and families confirm this.

## **Quality of care**

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

Young people are provided with an outstanding level of care and support which has had a significant impact on their personal and social development. Young people's views and aspirations are at the heart of placement planning, which fully reflects their individuality. Support plans are comprehensive and contain measureable aims for each assessed area. Young people meet on a monthly basis with key workers and the manager to review their progress and identify any further areas for development. In addition, young people complete a monthly self-assessment which focuses on informing staff of how they feel, what they have achieved and areas they may require more support in. This innovative practice has empowered young people to recognise their many achievements, develop an understanding of their own needs and confidence in determining when and how they want support.

The physical and emotional health of young people is exceptionally well promoted. This is achieved in part by the very positive role modelling from the staff team and underpinned by excellent support, guidance and care as documented in individual plans. All young people have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves fit. They make healthy choices and have a positive attitude to taking regular exercise. Staff access specialist health and psychological support services to meet young people's individual needs.

Staff work enthusiastically with young people to help them develop a positive self-view. For example, staff really value and support young people's education and positive family contact. Staff have high aspirations for young people and they provide practical and emotional support with homework, college interviews, drama productions and exams. One parent said, 'My child has had the most amazing school report ever. I am so proud of her and this service has played a big part in this.'

The staff team are experienced, skilled and very child focused. Staff are very mindful of young people's past experiences and how this affects their current behaviour and attitudes. They work effectively as a team to support young people, developing respectful and trusting relationships. Young people know how to make a complaint within the home and are also provided with their own telephone with pre-set contacts to regulatory bodies, helplines and placing authorities. Young people approach staff confidently in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their wishes acted upon where possible.

Young people display care and affection for each other and welcome new residents into the home. On occasions young people experience conflict of interests; staff skilfully facilitate group meetings in order to resolve issues positively. Because of these meetings young people have become more assertive in appropriately voicing their opinions, are learning how to compromise and are developing greater empathy of others. Staff recognise, praise and reward young people's positive achievements and behaviour. Young people devise their own incentive plans and as a result take responsibility for their individual areas of development. Sanctions are rarely used and are kept to a minimum with good evaluation of their effectiveness by the manager.

Staff have a very good understanding of young people's strengths and talents and provide activities which help to promote these. All young people are engaged in positive and regular activities where they have made constructive friendships and developed their self-esteem. Young people have made progress in their horse riding, athletics, drama, swimming and dance skills. In addition, some young people have had their written articles published in youth magazines and produced films to enthuse other young people about Forest School.

Young people are provided with accommodation that is comfortable, homely and well maintained. Young people take a pride in their home and have personalised their bedrooms and communal areas with art work, photographs and favourite colours.

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

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

Young people's safety and security in the home and local community is managed diligently. All people who contributed to this inspection strongly agree with this. Comprehensive safeguarding policies and risk assessments are fully understood by staff and are effectively and consistently implemented.

The staff team have a positive regard for young people's well-being and this contributes to trusting and respectful relationships. Young people have confidence in their relationships with carers to guide them and keep them safe. Young people say they feel protected and reflect that staff act with their best interests at heart. Young people are provided with excellent support, guidance and information in relation to personal safety and issues of exploitation. Young people demonstrate they have applied this advice to their own individual situations, and as a result, have been able to make safe and considered choices which they previously would not have made.

Over the past year the home has enabled young people to become more self-sufficient and take age appropriate risks. This has included independent travel, spending free time with friends and having internet access. Individual work is undertaken with young people on personal safety and keeping themselves safe in all these situations. Carers work at each young person's pace and their sensitivity and understanding of each individual helps them to make progress and gain confidence. Young people speak positively about being trusted to engage in these activities. They demonstrate a good understanding of the issues that may affect them and strategies they can employ to protect themselves. Staff complete regular safeguarding training and they know how to report any allegation or suspicion of harm to protect young people. The manager works collaboratively with local agencies and other professionals to ensure young people access the services that they need and their welfare is promoted and protected. Suitable protocols and training are in place to manage any incidents of young people going missing or the need to use restraint. However, in practice young people do not engage in behaviours that would lead to the implementation of these systems.

Risk assessments and behaviour support plans are highly personalised and comprehensively reflect young people's assessed needs. These documents are of excellent quality and provide staff with the necessary guidance and strategies to minimise risks and proactively manage any concerns. Recruitment and selection processes within the organisation are robust and the necessary checks are made to make sure that only suitable people are employed to work within the home. The requisite fire, utilities, health and safety checks are undertaken routinely by the home to provide a safe and secure environment for staff and young people to reside in.

## **Leadership and management**

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

A highly experienced and aspirational manager leads this service. Staff are clear about their individual and collective responsibilities and fully understand the overall aims for the provision and each young person's individual aims. There is commitment to provide young people with structure and boundaries within a highly nurturing environment to enable them to be safe and secure within the home and community. This ethos is successfully implemented in practice and as a result the service has a very good record of accomplishment for achieving outstanding outcomes for all young people. Attainments have consistently been sustained and improved upon each year.

The provider has developed effective internal quality monitoring systems, including the very comprehensive approach to monitoring each young person individually against the Regulation 34 format. Young people contribute to reviewing the quality of care and provide the manager with monthly written reports about their placement and care they have received. Young people give their views on how happy they are in the placement, whether their individual aims have been achieved and make suggestions for improvements to the environment. The manager analyses all the monitoring information and has an accurate understanding and evaluation of the home's strengths and areas for improvement. Development plans focus on securing improvements that positively affect young people.

Since the last full inspection a number of practices have been successfully devised, established and embedded which have contributed to improving the quality of provision and outcomes for young people. These have included improvements to consultation with young people, enabling age appropriate risk taking and the development of a suitable independence programme.

Each young person is provided with their own dedicated team of well-trained, effectively supervised and experienced group of carers. They have one-to-one support at all times and as a result engage in plentiful activities and meaningful interactions. Regular team meetings, handovers and supervisions are of excellent quality and fully focus on direct work with young people.

Information relating to significant events affecting young people's safety is notified to relevant agencies, including Ofsted and placing authorities. This ensures that issues relating to young people's safety is appropriately shared and effectively managed. Young people's information is professionally organised, monitored and stored securely. Young people are supported to maintain a record of their time in the home and keep photographs and copies of all key documentation.



## 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.