

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Susan Mullin
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is registered to provide specialist care and accommodation for up to 3 young people. Young people may have a combination of mental health, psychological, emotional or complex care needs that present challenging behaviour. The home's programme of care incorporates a structured balance of education, recreation and therapeutic interventions tailored to meet individual needs. It is operated by a private provider.

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 **good**.

This is a good home with some outstanding features. Staff value the importance of building meaningful relationships with young people and work hard to achieve this. As a result, young people are settled and say they enjoy time with staff. Care and placement planning is effective and responsive to young people's existing and developing needs. Young people have the opportunity to contribute to their own care planning and the running of the home and they are regularly consulted on all aspects of their care.

Safeguarding is a high priority in all aspects of young people's care. There is a strong focus on behaviour management that significantly enhances positive behaviour. Young people have made good progress in the way they deal with their own challenging behaviours and as a result there has been a significant reduction in their risk taking behaviours. Staff work hard to provide a safe environment in which young people feel safe.

Young people are consistently supported to attend education. There is a strong commitment to help young people address significant deficits in their educational attendance and achievement. Young people are proud of their achievements and continue to grow in confidence.

Sound leadership and management techniques are being employed to provide staff

with relevant training and good quality support to enable them to manage challenging behaviours. Managers have established some very good working relationships with associated professionals and use these well to promote young people's safety and encourage positive outcomes during their placement.

There are no breaches of regulations or national minimum standards.

Outcomes for children and young people

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

Young people make good progress in this service. Staff have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complex individual needs of young people in their care. They support young people to make good progress in developing a positive self-view. This enables young people to form and sustain attachments with the staff and their family members. The home promotes a positive ethos that embraces diversity and recognises individuality. As a result, young people begin to truly appreciate the significance of differing values and are actively learning to have respect for each other.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health needs and maintain good personal hygiene. This helps to increase their self-esteem and self-image. Young people are benefiting from good access to physical and mental health care and some are taking advantage of support to help them give up smoking and reduce long-term misuse of drugs. The numbers of absences without authority and of physical interventions have significantly reduced. As a result, young people maintain a healthy lifestyle and are learning how to keep themselves safe.

Young people eat a well-balanced diet and are encouraged to take part in planning, preparing and cooking meals. This helps young people prepare for independent living and equips them with necessary life skills. Young people enjoy a range of activities and opportunities in the community, such as football, swimming, bowling and other outdoor events. Good staffing levels allow for individual interests and talents to be developed, which helps to increase their skills and self-confidence.

Young people make good progress with their school attendance, although they are at different stages. Staff are proactive in supporting the young people to attend and achieve at their education provisions. Young people plan for leaving school and engage in exploring further learning and career opportunities. As a result, young people continue to make a positive contribution to society and their life chances improve.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. This ensures relationships continue to develop and strengthen.

Quality of care

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

Young people enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with staff in the home. These are developing because young people are increasingly willing to discuss their behaviours and concerns. A young person said, 'I like it here, the staff are nice and spend time with me.' Young people confirmed they are aware of how to make a complaint but stated that they have never needed to. A written compliment to the home from a parent stated, 'To all the staff, thank you all for the help and support you gave us and our child, we are so grateful.'

Staff are committed to ensure young people have opportunities to express their individual identity and that they receive care which reflects their age, gender, culture and abilities. Care planning is comprehensive and very individual. When young people have experienced multiple placements previously, the home provides a settled environment where young people can explore their own identity issues.

Young people benefit from increased attendance at their educational placements as staff are proactive and consistent in supporting the educational achievement of young people. They engage daily with teachers at school or college and receive feedback, mainly about behaviour and relationships, so that there is continuity in behaviour management.

The home provides a very healthy environment and has a weekly programme which includes cleaning, shopping, mealtimes and bedtimes. These routines cater for each young person's individual needs and promote their learning about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Young people's views and wishes influence the running of the home and they feel confident to express their feelings to all staff. As well as regular opportunities to speak with key workers on an individual basis, there are regular house meetings and mealtimes are also used to promote open discussion.

Young people benefit from good quality care, which includes access to a number of health professionals when required. Young people's care plans are comprehensive and identify individual needs. These plans are reviewed regularly to take into account young people's changing needs and any developments. Good outcomes result from staff's very positive contribution to each young person's health plan. As a result young people's complex emotional and psychological health needs are being addressed.

The home is comfortable and well-appointed and the layout gives young people adequate privacy when they want it. This gives young people a sense that they are valued and deserve to live in a pleasant environment.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people confirmed that they are safe in the home and feel safe. Staff recognise behaviour and trigger factors that may be behind young people going missing and

work closely with them, explaining the danger they put themselves in. This has reduced the episodes of going missing and helps to keep young people safe. Young people have supportive and caring relationships with the staff. They also get on well with each other as summed up by one young person who said, 'There is no bullying here, we get on well together. The other two young people are like my brothers.' Positive ways of managing the behaviour of young people are utilised effectively. As a result, physical restraint has only been used on one occasion since the last inspection.

Management and staff promote a culture that ensures young people feel listened to and are always respected as individuals. Sanctions for misbehaviour are appropriate and recorded in sufficient detail; there is evaluation of how effective they are. The staff receive regular training on how to safeguard and promote young people's welfare. They clearly understand how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of harm and as a result this keeps young people safe.

The home has their own therapy team and all young people are encouraged to engage in therapy sessions to explore their backgrounds, risks and behaviour. A social worker stated, 'I am very pleased with this placement. Work is beginning with the young person to look back into his childhood and start to make some sense of it. He is learning to deal with those emotions and become more in control of his feelings.'

Young people's welfare and safety is effectively addressed. Risk taking behaviours in the home are reducing and all risks are very well managed through the risk assessment process. This means that young people can take appropriate risks in a safe environment. This helps to protect young people from the risk of harm, while at the same time enabling them to take controlled risks in a safe and supportive environment. This also builds up their confidence and self-esteem.

Young people are protected with robust staff recruitment procedures in place which ensure that only suitable people are employed to work at the home. The premises are maintained in a safe condition. The staff conduct fire drills regularly and all staff and young people know what to do in the event of an emergency. Additionally, there are good systems within the home to ensure that any risks to young people are identified and controlled. This means that the home is a safe place for young people to live and staff to work in.

Leadership and management

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

At the previous inspection no requirements or recommendations were made.

The manager is appropriately qualified and has an excellent range of relevant experience to guide her leadership of the staff team. She is competent and confident in her ability to promote positive outcomes for young people and in the financial and professional support she receives from the provider organisation. There are clear and

appropriate arrangements for covering her absence. The manager has exceptionally high expectations of her staff team and is pro-active in ensuring all staff receive a full training programme to equip them with specific skills relevant to the young people accommodated. There is clear evidence of how the care and support provided by the whole staff team have improved outcomes for young people.

The home's Statement of Purpose provides full information about the aims, objectives and care practices. These objectives are being utilised in everyday practice ensuring young people feel safe, protected and well cared for. Young people confirmed that they were provided with a children's guide to the home upon admission.

Young people are supported by a staff team which is comprised of a good mix of gender, race, age and experience. This helps young people learn about differences and they benefit from shared experiences such as learning about different cultures and trying different foods. The home maintains an appropriate level of staffing. For example, one young person said, 'There are always enough staff on duty whenever I need them, they are there.'

New staff receive induction training to the standard set by the Children's Workforce Development Council and they complete it in the appropriate timescale. All the established members of staff are qualified to level 3 in care or working towards it. The staff receive training in a wide range of subjects and they receive regular formal one-to-one supervision from a senior person. This covers an appropriate range of issues including an assessment of their work with each young person and a discussion of their own performance.

All staff attend monthly team meetings during which they evaluate how young people's individual needs are being met and how their challenging and potentially unsafe behaviours are being managed consistently. As a result, staff have seen improvements in young people's engagement with staff and reductions in risk taking behaviours.

The manager has established robust relationships with the local police and a range of health and education professionals. The manager demonstrates an excellent awareness of the development needs of the service and there is a strong drive to improve care practices throughout. Quality assurance systems, in terms of monitoring under Regulation 34 by the manager and visits in line with Regulation 33 on behalf of the provider organisation, are extremely robust. Monitoring incorporates regular consultation with young people and reports reflect their views well. Where shortfalls are identified they are addressed quickly and thoroughly.

Each young person's key worker writes a monthly report summarising the young person's progress. These are comprehensive and include attendance at school or college and other important matters. Young people confirm they are able to be involved in meetings where key decisions are made about their futures and contribute to decision making. Statutory reviews of care plans take place on time and the staff help to ensure each young person's views and opinions are made clear.

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.