

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Amanda Ellis
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The home is privately owned. It provides care and accommodation for up to eight young people with emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties.

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**.

Young people living at this home experience exceptionally good standards of care delivered by a highly skilled and knowledgeable management and staff team. They benefit from individualised and comprehensive care planning. Young people make very good progress from their time of admission to this home. They receive care and support which encourages them to fulfil their potential educationally, socially and personally.

Young people have highly positive views about their care, the staff and the home. They are able to reflect on how they have benefited from their placements and support at this home. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent.

Young people are safe and report that they feel safe. Safeguarding practices are robust and effective. Where young people engage in risk-taking behaviours, staff work with a range of professionals to ensure young people are protected from potential harm. Young people's welfare is the centre of staff practice, regardless of the challenges they present.

The management team provides leadership which ensures that high standards are maintained. They strive for continual improvement and can identify areas of further development needed to secure improved outcomes for all young people.

Shortfalls identified within this inspection are in relation to consultation with young people, parents and professionals within internal monitoring processes and minor omissions in supervision records. However, these shortfalls do not impact negatively on the outcomes for children.

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
34 (2001)	ensure the registered person shall establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home. This system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. (Regulation 34 (1) (a) (b) (3))	12/08/2013

Recommendations

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

- maintain a written or electronic record of staff supervision; detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, including the registered person and ensuring the record is signed by the supervisor and the member of staff at the end of the supervision. (NMS 19.5)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people thrive within this home. They develop positive attachments and relationships with carers. This enables them to learn to understand their backgrounds and develop a sense of identity. They progress to develop a more positive self-view and improved emotional resilience.

Young people benefit from improved health. They experience routine health care, healthy diets and active lifestyles. They are given advice, guidance and support by staff and other professionals on a range of issues, including smoking cessation and sexual health issues. Consequently, young people are able to make informed decisions about their health based on good levels of understanding and knowledge. This means that young people benefit from good health outcomes.

Educational outcomes are outstanding in this home. School attendance is excellent and young people make exceptional progress. Staff ensure that attendance is

supported and consistent. School and home staff have effective daily communication which means young people benefit from the consistency in care which this provides.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with family, friends and other people who are important to them. The staff team collaborate with professionals and families and promote positive contact in line with the arrangements agreed in individual care plans.

Young people occasionally engage in risk-taking behaviours. In such circumstances, support provided by the staff and other agencies effectively reduces incidents and minimises further risk. Staff work proactively with the young people and support them to develop more productive behaviour. Young people have improved life chances as a result of living at this home.

Young people effectively learn independence skills. Support and guidance from staff, combined with rigorous assessment, prepares young people to live independently. They develop confidence, practical experience and knowledge. Young people acquire the necessary life skills to successfully live independently.

Quality of care

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

Young people receive an outstanding quality of care at the home. Staff have consistently high aspirations for all young people. They are diligent and conscientious in developing new knowledge and skills to improve the delivery of care. Young people flourish with the quality of the care they receive.

Young people develop positive rapport and respectful relationships with the staff team and with each other. Young people clearly state that the staff and managers are the best part of living at the home. Young people say, 'They listen,' and, 'They are always there,' and, 'They help me with anything I need.' Young people thrive because of their effective relationships with staff.

Young people say that they feel listened to and that their views are taken into consideration and acted upon. For example, enabling young people to plan and participate in the interior design of the home. They make a positive contribution to the home through regular meetings and actively contributing to decisions about their care. This means that service provision develops in line with young people's views about the quality of their care.

Young people receive a guide which contains information on their care, advocacy, and the details of people they can contact if they wish to raise a concern. This ensures that they understand what to expect from the care they receive. Young people know how to make a complaint to staff and outside agencies. When complaints are made they are dealt with in line with the home's policy.

Care plans, placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are exceptionally comprehensive, detailed and up to date. Young people have their own placement plans which involve them in contributing to their care. Regular reviews of plans ensure young people receive consistent care and the staff team has clarity to provide effective support to children.

The home provides a healthy environment which ensures young people access a range of services to meet their physical, psychological and emotional needs. Comprehensive health care plans mean staff can ensure young people's physical, psychological and emotional needs are met. Medication is very well managed, with robust administration, storage and recording processes.

The home has its own independent school on site. This facility was last inspected by Ofsted in 2012 and received an 'outstanding' judgement. The home has a strong ethos about all young people attending and achieving in school. Many of the young people have not attended or engaged with education prior to coming to the home. All of the young people have since re-engaged with education. Young people are enthusiastic about the school and are extremely proud of their achievements. They have clear education plans and receive individualised support. They develop the skills, confidence and knowledge to participate in the National Curriculum, with some progressing to college and university.

Young people have the opportunity and support to try a stimulating range of new activities. They routinely take part in a broad variety of leisure pursuits. There are outdoor activities specialists within the staff team and dedicated time for outdoor pursuits. One young person said, 'Do you know what I do to keep fit? Canoeing and skiing! Where else could you do that?' These opportunities provide young people with a range of ways to explore their talents and skills and thereby build confidence and self-esteem.

Staff build exceptionally effective partnerships with external agencies and social work professionals. One social worker commented, 'I am really impressed in all respects'. Another professional stated, 'They are mindful to ensure that young people get the best. It is a delight and joy to know that such a level of care exists.'

The home is spacious, homely, well decorated, and very well maintained. The home is in a rural area. It has a large garden, fish pond, gardens, football pitch, outdoor play areas and play equipment. The home also keeps some small animals which the young people help to care for.

The promotion of equality and diversity is a key feature of the operation of the home. The staff team demonstrate sensitivity and a firm commitment to assessing and understanding the individual needs of all children. Young people are encouraged to understand their own individuality and to respect and celebrate the diversity of others.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people are safe and say unequivocally that they feel safe. Stringent work practices and comprehensive, regularly updated risk assessments ensure that young people are safe. Staff have a solid understanding of safeguarding issues and consistently review safe working practices. This ensures safeguarding practice meets young people's individual needs.

There have been reported incidents of young people going missing from the home since the last inspection, however, the frequency of these incidents has reduced over time. The home has agreed protocols and procedures to follow should young people go missing, which are implemented appropriately. Staff are aware of triggers which lead to young people going missing. They work with young people to address these issues upon their return to the home and in key work sessions. Risks are minimised through staff awareness of factors which lead to young people going missing.

Staff promote positive behaviour for young people at all times. They promote an approach which encourages young people to reflect on how their behaviour impacts on others. Consequently, young people learn to take more responsibility for their own behaviour. Young people report no incidents of bullying within the home.

Physical intervention is not a method of behaviour management often used in the home. When used, it is only used in accordance with the legislative framework. Staff who undertake physical interventions are suitably trained and equipped with the skills to de-escalate situations. The recording of such incidents is in line with regulatory requirements.

In circumstances where young people engage in risk taking or damaging behaviour, clear safeguarding processes provide a robust response. A police officer stated, 'They are proactive in working with the most complex behaviours; they are very good at communicating and working with us, which means we can work together to keep young people safe.' He went on to say, 'I am very impressed with the work they do. I hold them in high regard.'

No new staff members have joined since the last inspection. However, staff recruitment practice ensures that staff employed to work in the home experience a rigorous selection process prior to taking up their positions.

The home is physically safe for the children. Maintenance within the home is of an extremely high standard, with staff implementing consistent monitoring and security to ensure the safety of children.

Leadership and management

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

The Registered Manager and management team are experienced and knowledgeable professionals. They have significant direct experience, knowledge and skills in

working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and challenging behaviour.

One requirement was made at the last inspection to ensure suitable arrangements for the recording of medicines. The manager has addressed the shortfall accordingly, thus meeting the requirement.

Young people benefit from a home that has made significant improvements in the delivery of quality care. For example, by commissioning therapeutic practitioners to deliver a range of therapies which are best suited to the needs of individual young people. The development plan reflects practical proposals for continued improvement, with plans for staff development, training and an emphasis on child-centred practice. The management team understand the strengths and weaknesses of the home and takes action to tackle weakness and make improvements.

A key strength of the home is the absolute commitment and dedication of the stable staff team. They are cohesive, enthusiastic and have vast experience within young people's residential care. This means that young people receive sound and safe care.

Young people benefit from effective management and monitoring of the home. The Registered Manager undertakes routine monitoring activities. However, this has not included seeking the views of young people, parents or stakeholders. Comprehensive monitoring visits by an independent visitor provide an additional level of quality assurance. This ensures that young people receive a consistently good quality of care.

Staffing levels ensure consistent levels of support which meet the needs of the home and the young people in placement. The management team provide a reliable presence, offering support on shifts and an on-call service.

Staff participate in a training programme which is relevant to the young people's needs. Supervision is regular and staff are positive about the manager and the quality and consistency of the support they receive. Minor omissions in supervision records mean that the duration of supervisions are not clear.

Records are clear, up-to-date and stored securely. All notifications are carried out as required and appropriate action is taken to follow procedures and protect young people.

The home demonstrates a strong capacity for continuing improvement based on its track record and performance since the last inspection.

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* and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of children's homes.