

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Andrew Hewston
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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 exceptionally high standard of personalised care for young people. Young people make progress while living in the home. Their behaviour, health, education and safeguarding needs are fully supported and in most cases improved.

Staff have an exceptionally high awareness of the needs of the young people and develop positive relationships with them throughout their time at the home. This care enables them to develop in emotional maturity and promotes positive attachments. Young people's needs and their views are central to all aspects of how the home operates.

The staff are consistently praised by those professionals involved with them. The home is very well managed. Recommendations for improvement are made in relation to increasing the level of assessment of monitoring of the home and developing the current training package to staff. These shortfalls do not at any point adversely impact on young people's welfare.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept

by the home to ensure compliance with the home's policies, to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends (NMS 21.2)

- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments. (NMS 18.1)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Young people are extremely well supported and develop while at the home. A parent stated that their child had 'really come on, more than they have done at home'. Another stated that, 'The staff have transformed him and he is the happiest I have ever seen him. This is due to the wonderful care from the dedicated staff.' Highly effective and professional relationships are in place between the staff and young people. Young people state that they enjoy being at the home with one stating that the 'staff have a heart of gold'. Staff promote a variety of communication systems to young people. This has in turn enabled young people to have a say in the home that they live in and decisions that are made relating to their care.

Young people develop in their ability to look after themselves while being at the home. Staff encourage healthy living and activities, and young people are seen to enjoy these. Young people's medication has been reduced in the majority of cases, enabling them to have less dependence on medicines when they leave the home. Staff support regular health appointments and with effective joint working with their schools, young people enjoy good health.

Young people enjoy excellent arrangements for their educational development, with high attendance and consistent communication with education providers. Achievements in school are celebrated, with young people's certificates being displayed within the home's entrance hall, to further encourage awareness in how they are doing in school. One school report highlighted that, 'There has been excellent contact with the staff through the home school diary, telephone and all meetings and parents evenings are attended. (The young person) always arrives in school with everything he needs for the day.'

Young people develop and mature at the home. They respond to the effective and consistent boundaries established by staff. This consistency helps promote positive behaviour which is in turn rewarded by staff. Young people do not engage in risk taking behaviour.

Young people enjoy and benefit from differing arrangements to see their families. Family visits are supported by staff where necessary, giving families and young people help to get the most out of the visits. Young people that do not have contact with their families are also fully supported during times of possible anxiety to ensure that this does not impact negatively on their well-being.

Transition arrangements are of a consistently high quality, with all those that have left since the last inspection continuing to enjoy stable placements. Arrangements are being rolled out to support young people that are due to move in the new year, with new staff working with the young people and information being shared about possible future placements. This decreases possible future anxieties for young people when the time to move occurs.

Quality of care

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

Relationships between young people and staff is of a high quality. Staff have an extremely good awareness of the differing needs of young people and can discuss in detail how these are currently being met, as well as planning for the future. The staff team provide a nurturing environment where young people experience stable and consistent care. This stability and the quality of the relationships between young people and staff are key factors in achieving positive outcomes for the young people in the home.

Young people are continually consulted about their care and their activities. Their wishes and feelings are sought in both formal and informal situations through an effective range of communication tools. Due to their positive relationships with young people, staff are able to interpret their sometimes subtle responses. This allows for young people to have a say in their lives at the home. Other young people's responses to the home and the staff are robust, being presented within young people's meetings clearly and responded to. Information relating to complaints is available in the home in differing formats and this is gone through with the young people regularly. No complaints have been made at the home since the last inspection.

Planning for young people is of a high quality. All young people have a placement plan folder, incorporating differing aspects of their lives, including likes and dislikes, health planning and a clear synopsis of their lives at the home. Plans link to reviews that have been held and aspects of care that may have changed. Plans are therefore regularly updated to show the day-to-day care being provided to the young people. Staff are fully aware of young people's health needs, ensuring all appointments are kept and the findings of these responded to. A healthy environment forms part of life at the home, with the majority of young people enjoying long walks in the community and being involved with differing activities. Medication administration is appropriate, with all staffs' training on medication administration being updated regularly. Communication between the school and home relating to health is excellent, with information being shared about medical interventions or appointments and if these have had a particular impact on young people.

All young people attend and achieve within educational placements. Staff attend all necessary meetings and reviews with schools, sharing information about the young people as well as bringing their views where appropriate. Personal education plans and educational statements are available and help to inform practice within the

home.

An excellent range of activities are available within the home. These include a large soft play room, a suitably decorated 'dark room' for cinema evenings and gaming, and three lounge areas all with games and activities for young people to enjoy. A new art room extension has allowed young people increased ability to be involved in differing art projects. The home's therapeutic pool is enjoyed by young people and is accessible through a track hoist system if necessary. An activity board is updated on a monthly basis displaying differing events that have occurred within the home, raising awareness among the young people of their achievements. Theme nights encourage an awareness of differing cultures and aspects of life. A recent remembrance evening was linked to foods from the Black Country during the war. Young people also enjoy a range of activities within the community. Young people have been involved with six different holidays since the last inspection to allow them to encounter differing environments and experiences.

The home is well decorated and maintained throughout. All areas are comfortable and homely, with staff and young people being involved in both choosing colours and decorating when appropriate. All bedrooms are well personalised, with the support of young people's key workers. It is positive to note how well the décor is themed to the interests and age 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 confirm they feel safe in the home. They live in a safe, secure and stable environment. Levels of safety are effective because the robust policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and implemented by well trained staff. Systems for dealing with young people who may go missing from the home are well established. Risk assessments are in place to ensure appropriate, individualised practice should this occur and a local protocol is agreed. However, there have been no incidents of young people missing from this home.

Staff respond to the differing behaviours that young people display in a professional and thoughtful way. Approaches to behaviour are linked to those within schools, to achieve a consistent way of working. Behaviour management plans form part of placement planning to ensure that all staff work together to support the young people. Levels of restraint are low and fully recorded within a dedicated log as well as in daily logs to support young people's safety. All staff are trained in the use of restraint as well as distraction and diffusion techniques. Positive behaviour is rewarded and encouraged. Praise forms a large part of interactions with young people to support their development.

Appropriate training is given to the staff and because of this, safeguarding procedures are very well understood. They are fully aware of when and how to raise concerns, and when this is done the manager ensures mechanisms to support young

people are started. No full safeguarding concerns have been made at the home since the last inspection.

Staff are carefully selected and vetted through a robust recruitment process. This ensures only suitable people work with young people.

Fire, utilities, and health and safety checks are routinely undertaken to ensure that the home provides a safe and secure environment for staff and young people to dwell in. Risk assessments regarding the young people, their behaviour, the activities they are involved in and aspects of the home are fully completed and reviewed on a regular basis. This supports the safety of both the young people and the staff team.

Leadership and management

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

This home is efficiently and effectively managed by an experienced Registered Manager. The service excels at providing young people with structured and effective individualised care that promotes their health, welfare and education. Management systems are robust and there are clear policies and procedures. Staff know to whom they are accountable and what levels of responsibility are delegated to them.

Staff state that they are well supported by the management team, through regular supervisions and appraisals. Supervision and staff meeting records are of a good quality and show discussions relating to the needs of the home and how staff are responding to young people's needs. This enriches and helps improve the standard of care young people receive.

All staff have received appropriate training, and all have either completed or in the process of reaching the required diploma level. Due to the low turnover of staff, the majority have completed training relating specifically to the service provided. Less training has been available recently regarding this area, but is being considered as part of the development plan. The home has an appropriate development plan that highlights where the home is at the moment and also areas that would improve the lives of the young people.

The home is monitored by both the manager and the external visitor. This monitoring shows a good awareness of the home and the systems within it. When areas require attention they are responded to swiftly, although there is no specific evaluation of trends and patterns in practices currently being completed to further support development.

No recommendations or requirements arose from the previous 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.