

Inspection report for children's home

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| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 18/03/2014    |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Joanna Heller |
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## Service information

### Brief description of the service

This children's home is one of a small group of homes which are privately owned. The organisation also operates two schools. This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children of either gender. The home offers care and accommodation for children who have emotional and 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 thrive within the nurturing environment. Young people say the home is 'awesome' and that they like the staff. Parents say that care provided is of a high standard and rate the home as good to excellent.

Young people make strong individual progress from their starting points. They benefit from well trained and competent staff. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring positive relationships with families are maintained.

Young people are consulted on aspects of their day to day lives. Issues of conflict are rare and staff are vigilant to the dynamics within the home. Placements are well planned which means that no inappropriate placements are made. Staff are guided on how to support young people through good placement and care planning processes.

Young people know how to complain and have confidence in the home's ability to respond to any issues of concern which they may raise.

This is a well-led home with a strong ethos of care. Staff provide individualised care which meets the needs of young people. Staff are successful in maintaining clear and consistent boundaries for young people which has resulted in a reduction of challenging behaviour for young people.

Although young people's individual needs are well met there are some shortfalls in

maintenance of the grounds, ensuring sufficiently regular staff supervision and the formal review of quality of care. These do not significantly impact on the good quality of care provided to young people.

## 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   |
|--------------|---|------------|
| 23<br>(2001) | ensure that all parts of the home to which children have access are so far as reasonably practicable free from hazards to their health and safety. In particular; ensure that driveways and patios are safe and that the broken window is repaired<br>(Regulation 23 (a))   | 30/04/2014 |
| 34<br>(2001) | ensure that the system established for monitoring and improving the quality of care provides for consultation with young people accommodated in the home, their parents and placing authorities. In particular; ensure that the report does not contain children's names and personal information.<br>(Regulation 34) | 05/06/2014 |

### Recommendations

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

- ensure staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

### Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people enjoy settled, long term placements in which they thrive. they receive individualised and child focused care. Young people make strong individual progress. This is evidenced in areas such as, reductions in anxiety, improvements in behaviour and educational attainment, and the development of positive self-esteem.

Young people are healthy and have good awareness of healthy lifestyles. A small minority of young people continue to make poor choices such as, smoking and engaging in risky behaviour.

Young people feel safe, secure and nurtured. Young people are developing strong emotional bonds with staff. Young people's self-esteem has increased, as has their awareness of positive relationships. For example, some young people who previously shrank from appropriate physical contact will now ask for hugs. This is assisting young people's social and emotional development and has a positive impact on their relationships and self-esteem. Young people are making strong educational progress, taking into account their starting points. For example, one child's school report states that they are improving in all subjects, but making particular improvement in reading and writing.

Young people enjoy an active and varied life, enjoying opportunities to try new leisure activities. Their individual interests are considered when planning activities. Young people have enjoyed going on holiday, trips to theme parks and regularly go swimming.

Young people are able to maintain regular contact with their family, some travelling very long distances with staff every few weeks. They develop skills that promote their independence at a level which is appropriate to them. For example developing self-care and social skills in addition to carrying out household chores.

### **Quality of care**

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

Young people enjoy stable placements where they are able to grow and flourish. Staff changes are minimal. This means that young people are able to develop strong relationships with staff which helps develop their emotional resilience. Young people enjoy the high levels of personal attention paid to them by staff. They like living at the home and enjoy the company of staff who read to them and play with them. Staff describe clear settling routines which help young people feel safe. For example, staff stay outside of a room until the young person settles. This means that they know there is always someone there for them.

Good placement and care planning processes effectively guide staff on how to support young people. The 'my placement plan' document developed by staff covers all areas of the child's strengths, needs, identity, routines and goals. This means that staff are well aware of the child's needs.

Young people are healthy. They have access to appropriate health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. Specialist health services are accessed when required. Parents have confidence in staff to competently manage their child's particular health conditions.

Most young people have good school or college attendance. Staff have high aspirations for young people and are committed to supporting young people to meet their full potential. Staff are proactive in supporting young people's education seeking alternative arrangements when young people are not progressing well. Staff

maintain close contact with schools ensuring positive transitions when there are changes in education. Staff attend school plays and open days which means that young people feel that staff supportive.

Staff are aware of young people's individual interests and support opportunities for normal childhood development and experiences. For example, one young person enthusiastically designs and builds structures, such as, sheds and a safe. Staff have been imaginative in exploiting this desire to develop the young person's learning. For example, staff have provided the young person with a budget and shown them how to safely use tools. This is a therapeutic activity which has inspired the young person to develop their awareness of money and self-regulate their behaviour in order to use the tools.

Staff support young people to understand their personal history, and how this affects them. Staff are flexible in responding to young people's needs and reflect on how young people's life experience may impact on how they perceive the world around them. Staff spend ample time with young people to ensure interaction is meaningful, allowing relationships to develop naturally.

The implementation of constant and effective boundaries within a nurturing environment has enabled young people to develop greater self-regulation of their behaviour. This means that there has been a significant reduction in challenging behaviour. One school highlighted how successfully staff have managed a child's move into the home, stating 'x' has developed relationships so much sooner than I thought was possible'. Young people enjoy active lives and participate in weekly community based clubs of their choice, such as, bowling and laser shooting where they are beginning to make new friendships. When young people move on from the home staff ensure that endings are positive and that young people have the opportunity to say goodbye.

The home is appropriately located, spacious and homely. The driveway and patio have broken up, presenting a health and safety risk however, plans to address this are in place. Fire prevention arrangements in the home ensure young people and staff are safeguarded from fire in-line with current good practice.

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

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

Young people feel safe and well cared for. They identify favourite staff in whom they would confide if something was worrying them. An independent advocate regularly visits the home. This provides an additional independent person with whom young people can raise any concerns.

Families and professionals have confidence in the service to effectively safeguard and protect young people. Staff work closely with partner agencies such as, placing authorities, youth offending teams and the police to ensure the on-going safety of young people and the community.

Staff are proactive at addressing safeguarding issues through regular keyworking sessions which are effective in helping young people understand the risks they place themselves at. Staff are strong on maintaining boundaries and talking things through with young people. This helps young people understand expectations regarding keeping themselves and others safe, and the reasons for this. Safeguarding remains at the centre of staff practice and the manager is clear when young people require further specialist support. Strong multi-agency partnerships ensure that any significant incidents and safeguarding concerns are swiftly fed to the appropriate agencies.

When young people go missing from care, staff are proactive in liaising with parents and partner agencies to review possible causes and risk reduction. Staffing levels are high and this reduces the risk of young people going missing. Comprehensive risk assessments and management plans are in place which guide staff effectively. This means that staff are competent in balancing vulnerability with developing age appropriate independence.

Staff are attentive to managing conflict within the group and remain vigilant to any signs of bullying. Regular discussions about respect take place. This ensures that issues of bullying within the home are rare.

Sanctions are used appropriately and focus on restorative approaches. Young people are able to identify how they have matured and how they want to be 'a nice person'. They are restrained only when they become unsafe. Staff help them understand why they were held and how this can be prevented in the future. Only suitably trained and competent staff are involved in applying physical intervention. Sanctions used, and any incidents of restraint, are clearly recorded with young people being afforded an opportunity to discuss their views. Strong monitoring of these records means that any emerging patterns and trends are quickly identified.

The clear and consistent boundaries have enabled young people to make strong progression in the self-regulation of their behaviour. For example, one young person during the first six months of admission was restrained 53 times to keep them safe. Subsequent improvements in their behaviour meant that no restraint took place for over a year.

The manager ensures the home's internal environment is a safe place in which to live and work through regular maintenance and safety checks. The driveway and patio areas to the front and rear of the building present a significant tripping hazard. The organisation has plans to replace both the driveway and patio by the end of April.

## **Leadership and management**

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

Staff are led by an enthusiastic and competent management team. All requirements and recommendations from the previous inspection are met. The manager has a

clear vision for the home, as demonstrated in the development plan. However, the quality of care review, whilst highly detailed, does not clearly link to the development plan nor clearly identify how the service can improve. Staff are strong at seeking the views of young people and partner agencies but these reviews are not utilised to fully understand the strengths and areas for growth within the service.

The manager benefits from regular supervision and keeps up-to-date with changes in legislation and best practice. Formal individual staff supervision is not sufficiently regular and does not meet the frequency set out in the organisations policy. The impact of this is minimal as staff continue to feel well supported through regular good quality group discussions, debriefs and team meetings.

Staff have benefitted from training in core areas such as, first aid, safeguarding, restraint and medication. Further relevant specialist training, such as 'secure base', is planned. All staff have completed or are undertaking the diploma in caring for young people. Investment in staff training means that staff feel valued and able to confidently and competently perform their role.

Staffing levels are good and are arranged flexibly to meet young people's needs. Parents, schools and placing authorities highlight that staff are strong at working in partnership, ensuring the child remains the central focus of all discussions and plans. The manager ensures that all significant events are notified to the relevant authorities and that appropriate actions are taken following the incident. Staff relationships with young people are sensitive and caring. Placing authorities comment on how patient and caring staff are.

Record keeping within the home is strong, enabling the manager to clearly identify causes in behaviour and any emerging patterns and trends. This means the manager is clearly able to demonstrate the positive impact that the home has on promoting positive outcomes for young people. The Statement of Purpose has been updated since the last inspection and is a useful document which outlines the services the home is able to provide. The home is suitably resourced to meet the aims and objectives as set out in the Statement of Purpose.

Placing authorities comment that this home benefits from very strong management and leadership with a strong ethos of care.



## 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.