

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC033362
Inspector	Ann-Marie Born
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Secure Unit

Registered person	Peterborough City Council
Registered person address	Peterborough City Council, Chief Executive Town Hall, Bridge Street PETERBOROUGH PE1 1PJ
Responsible individual	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn
Registered manager	Jeannette Suzanne Winson
Date of last inspection	14/01/2014

Inspection date	14/05/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good
Outcomes in education and related learning activities	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good home overall. Strong care planning meets the unique, diverse and individual needs and vulnerabilities of all young people. As a result young people are empowered to invest in the care provided. This leads to improved self-esteem and feelings of self-worth which promote good outcomes. A social work manager said, 'she's made so much progress I really can't fault them in any way'.

The majority of young people speak positively about the care they receive and all young people can identify a member of staff they feel safe and comfortable with. Young people are and feel safe in this home where their individual vulnerabilities are understood and sensitively addressed. As a result they make substantial progress in addressing the past behaviours that place them at risk, promoting opportunities for positive outcomes. A young person said, 'it is one of the safest places I've ever been'.

The experienced and intuitive manager is realistic about the areas for of development in the home and has detailed plans in place to address those. The home has experienced a time of insecurity over the past twelve months due to the

prospect of the home being sold to a private provider. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, the management team have worked extremely hard to ensure that this has not had a negative impact on young people. As a result, the quality of care for young people has remained of a high standard with good outcomes.

There is one breach of regulation and a number of shortfalls to be fulfilled in order for the home, staff and young people to be able to achieve their full potential. These relate to the quality of recording, improving staff and supervision levels and ensuring the updated Statement of Purpose is readily available.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. The home comprises of four individual living units and education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

The children's home can accommodate up to 16 young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides 16 places for young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are over the age of 10 but under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/01/2014	Interim	good progress
03/06/2013	Full	good
20/11/2012	Interim	good progress
24/04/2012	Full	adequate

What does the children's home need to do to improve further?

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
4 (2001)	ensure that a copy of the home's up-to-date Statement of Purpose is available on the children's home web site and a copy is provided to Ofsted. (Regulation 4 (2) (2a))	23/06/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all young people and staff are given an opportunity to discuss incidences of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or affected by, with a relevant adult in a timely manner (NMS 3.17)
- ensure that written records kept when a child goes missing detail action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for running away from the home and any action taken in light of those reasons (NMS 5.10)
- ensure the overall number of staff can fulfil the home's Statement of Purpose to meet the individual needs of all the children in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure the record of supervisions details the time, date, and length of each supervision for each member of staff, including the registered person. The record is signed by the member of staff and the supervisor at the end of the supervision (NMS19.5)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept by the home to identify any concerns about specific incidents and to identify patterns and trends (NMS 21.2)
- ensure that all staff are familiar with the home's policies on record keeping, trained to maintain them and understand the need to be careful, objective and clear when making records (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, paragraph 3.38)
- ensure that education staff sharpen the focus on quality improvement in relation to teaching and learning by sharing more effectively the best classroom practice (NMS 23.10)
- ensure that education staff integrate the teaching of functional English and mathematics into lessons more consistently (NMS 23.10)
- ensure that education staff further develop professional development opportunities with local schools and subject communities. (NMS 23.10)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

The outcomes for young people as they journey through the home are good. They confirm they feel safe and secure in their environment, recognising the quality of the relationships they enjoy with staff, along with the support they receive. For example, one young person said; 'staff are great. They have helped me a lot.' Another nearing the end of her stay reflected; 'this place has been really good for me, but I am ready to go now.'

The positive feedback received from external sources supports the view that young people experience positive outcomes. They confirm that working partnerships are strong, which is beneficial to young people when arranging and planning for their transition towards a more independent lifestyle.

On admission, young people's physical, emotional and mental health needs are suitably assessed and addressed positively. Every day health needs, coupled with the facilities to address more complex and specialist need, are in place. These systems provided by the home's own nurse, psychologist and psychiatrist are complimented by visiting professionals and community based services. This ensures that all aspects of young people's health are being well met.

Since the previous inspection, the home has worked to improve the practice around administering medication and engaging young people positively with a project designed to improve eating habits. Both projects have been introduced following either complaint or consultation with young people, demonstrating the home's ability and willingness to listen to young people and then act positively and decisively. As a result, the system for administering medication has improved and young people are developing greater awareness regarding healthy eating and nutrition.

Contact arrangements for many young people are often complex due to the distance from home and for the need to ensure safety. Staff have a full awareness of the individual arrangements in place and work flexibly to ensure those arrangements are met. For example, during the inspection, arrangements were in place to ensure two young people who both had sick relatives, were able to leave to visit them. Young people appreciate this response and confirm their contact needs are being well met. In addition, parents report positively about facilities enabling them to spend extended quality time with their children within the home. For example, celebrating a family birthday together. Young people are fully supported to maintain important family and cultural relationships which sustains them now and in their future lives.

The arrangements for transition and developing greater independence are good. This work begins quickly after admission, with young people being involved in the planning process. The home recognises the importance of mobility as part of the preparation

for a more independent lifestyle, with mobility programmes planned and in place for each person where agreed and appropriate. This gives them something tangible to aim for as well as a sense of achievement. As a result, young people engage positively with their plans, giving them increased self-confidence and esteem as they progress towards transition.

Quality of care

good

The quality of care received by young people is good. This view is supported in the positive responses received from young people, and others who are external to the home. A particular area of strength identified is the strong relationships developed between staff and young people. These underpin the ethos and culture of a home, which works well in meeting young people's needs.

The strength of the relationships developed allows young people to develop trust in adults who act as good role models. On admission, the ability of staff to engage young people positively and build effective relationships, allows young people to settle and move forward. One young person reflected on this by saying; 'once I got over being here, I have done well and I am looking forward to leave.'

Young people and staff are comfortable together, actively enjoying each-others company. Young people benefit from a staff group that is diverse in its make up with a good mix of ethnicity, gender and age. As a result, young people can relate to staff they are comfortable with. This aids communication and consultation, which allows young people to express their views and make suggestions in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

Young people understand how to make a complaint and are confident to do so. Complaints are taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner. This is an area of improvement since the previous inspection. Young people also have access to an independent advocate who visits regularly and will take an active role in the complaints procedures, should a young person request this.

Planning for young people is strength. Placement plans are individualised, with needs identified along with the plans and strategies in place to address those needs. They are updated regularly to keep them current and link effectively with assessments of risk and other planning documents. When read collectively they give a good insight into the journey being experienced by a young person.

Young people demonstrate an understanding of their own placement plan. For example, they are encouraged and well supported to attend reviews. This results in young people taking some ownership of their plan, which gives them a sense of direction and goals to aim for.

Should a request be made, the independent advocate will support a young person at

their review process. However, this information is not available to young people in the young person's guide to the home. Action is being taken to address this.

A wide range of activities and leisure interests are available for young people both within the home and for those on mobility programmes. There is the capacity and flexibility to cater for both group and one-to-one activities. As well as an organised programme, young people are encouraged to use free-time constructively. For example, during the evening young people engage in a range of group and individualised activities.

The home's location, design and size support its purpose and function as a secure children's home. Appropriate service contracts along with regular security and health and safety checks are in place. Young people understand what action to take in the event of fire. Young people were observed as being comfortable and relaxed in their environment. They confirmed the colour schemes seen in their bedroom were of their own choice.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Young people report they feel safe and are safe in this home where their individual needs and vulnerabilities are identified and well planned for. An extensive training programme provides staff with the specialist training necessary to meet the diverse needs of young people. For example, enhanced child sexual exploitation training which incorporates both offender behaviour and 'Adolescence and Contextualising Child Sexual Exploitation for Victims'. Young people fully benefit from this proactive, innovative approach which enables them to make sense of their past and develop strong coping mechanisms for their future. A social worker stated: 'she's made fantastic progress particularly over the past month. I think the penny's dropped now in terms of her safety'.

Young people receive the same care, rights and protections within this home as they would within other residential settings. Consequently, young people's feelings of belonging and self-worth are enhanced enabling them to benefit from the care provided.

Young people are safeguarded by the effective use of non-obtrusive surveillance provision. This system contributes to young people's protection from bullying, abuse or unsafe behaviours while promoting their dignity and privacy. Young people are further protected by the implementation of strong safeguarding procedures, including those prepared to identify and counter risks of self-harm and suicide.

The committed staff team's thorough understanding of young people's individual vulnerabilities ensure they are safeguarded and the use of special clothing to protect them from self-harming is very rarely needed. Any such occurrences are first agreed with young people's placing authority and the mental health team before being

managed in line with their care plans and for the shortest possible time. As a result young people's self-respect is bolstered and maintained.

All episodes of single separation, known as restricted room time, are comprehensively recorded and young people protected by the effective monitoring of such sessions. Young people are provided with the opportunity to understand the consequences of their actions and the impact of this time alone by commenting in writing on the measure. Young people's dignity and privacy is further promoted by the sensitive and discreet management of the observation processes which safeguard them.

The well trained staff team understand and recognise signs and triggers of bullying behaviours and are quick to address them. Young people do not report any bullying. Any allegations are swiftly and effectively managed by the proactive manager ensuring that young people are safeguarded. The consistent approach to any allegations ensures that young people are heard and both staff and young people are fully supported.

Young people are provided with the opportunity to communicate directly with independent advocates outside of the home in addition to an efficient internal complaint system. Young people confidently use this and the homes, 'I Want to Say', process to express any dissatisfaction. Young people are protected and empowered by the swift responses to their complaints. For example, from wanting more shuttlecocks to play badminton with to proposing a rota to use the laundry facilities.

Robust security processes ensure that young people do not go missing from this home. Nevertheless there have been occasions when young people have become absent during mobility visits within the community. Strong partnership working with other agencies and adherence to locally agreed protocols ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to swiftly locate young people and return them to the home. Young people are further safeguarded by swift notification to all appropriate agencies, including Ofsted. However, although missing episodes are very rare and appropriate steps are taken with young people, they are not recorded in a detailed log therefore the opportunity to identify any patterns are not being taken.

Strong behaviour management planning and the staff's thorough understanding of young people's individual and diverse needs lead to positive relationships between the majority of staff and young people. As a result there has been a marked reduction in the number of physical interventions necessary to safeguard young people. Young people are further protected by the management's consistent overview of all such incidents. The majority of physical interventions are accurately recorded and formal debrief sessions take place with staff within a timely manner. This effectively enables staff to learn from each incident which safeguards young people while allowing staff members support each other more fully. However, on occasion not all records provide the necessary detail to comply with protocols and there have been delays in organising some debrief sessions.

There have been a number of staff changes since the last full inspection, including the appointment of the Registered Manager. The robust local authority selection and vetting processes are effectively followed. In addition, strong induction processes and careful monitoring of staff protect young people from being cared for by those who may pose a risk to them.

Young people are protected by very good health and safety arrangements which ensure that the home is physically safe and appropriately secure to meet their needs. An excellent 'Locality Risk assessment' clearly details the area and locality. In addition the home have built exceptional working relationships with the local police and fire service. This proactive, innovative practice ensures that young people are safe. For example, that different 'watches' at the fire station understand the layout and geography in the home and can react quickly if there ever were to be a fire.

Leadership and management

good

The period of time since the last full inspection has been one of uncertainty for the manager and staff as there were plans for the home to be outsourced to a private provider. The decision has now been made that this will not occur and the home remains under the governance of the local authority. In addition, the interim manager was successful in securing the permanent appointment in April 2014 as the home's manager and was registered with Ofsted.

The Registered Manager is suitably qualified and has extensive experience and knowledge in looking after young people with complex needs. She has made exceptional efforts to work inclusively with the management team, care staff and young people to ascertain their views on developing the service. As a result, a comprehensive development action plan identifies areas of improvement to promote and maintain the quality and standard of care provided to the young people.

The Registered Manager and management team demonstrate commitment to improving and raising the standards of care within the home. They are ambitious to ensure that key practices receive close attention and scrutiny and are also reflective. New systems and processes have been introduced to ensure records are detailed and supervisions are frequent. In addition training opportunities enable individualised professional development while staffing levels are increasing.

The home's clear Statement of Purpose outlines the aims, objectives, purpose and function of the care provided. This is regularly reviewed in line with legislation. However the most recent document is not available on the home's web site nor has been forwarded to Ofsted. Therefore, local authorities, parents and young people are not provided with up-to-date information regarding the homes services and provision.

The home provides a good standard of accommodation. Each lounge area is

personalised by the young people. Bedrooms are individualised with décor and displays of certificates of achievements, photos of family and friends and art work. The redesign of the internal communal space has provided an additional lounge that is used for young people to enjoy quiet time, play games and build jigsaws. This area has had a positive benefit for young people providing them with a choice of space in order to share positive time together or quiet time alone.

Young people receive a holistic service and are making good progress across all outcome areas. The home is able to evidence examples of achievement seen in all young people, regardless of their individual starting points. This includes developing social skills, increased confidence, self-esteem, and interaction with others. Young people are supported and encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, consider risks and develop independence skills.

The experienced staff team are well trained, knowledgeable and genuinely enjoy working with and spending time with young people. They are committed to helping young people to make positive changes in their lives by supporting them to achieve their potential and gain positive experiences and skills.

The extremely good training and development programme includes core and specialist subjects and is regularly reviewed. Care staff confirm that training opportunities are good, on-going and relevant to their roles. 'Drop- in' weekly training sessions are utilised well by all staff. 63% of care staff have achieved the relevant National Vocational Qualifications; a further 24% are working towards the qualification. The remaining 13% of care staff are new starters. Prior to working with young people all staff are required to attend a four week induction programme which includes the Children's Workforce Development Council's requirements. The open door policy ensures all staff are in regular dialogue with management.

Staff attend regular meetings to promote information sharing in addition to formal supervision sessions and performance reviews. However, due to staff shortages the frequency and quality of formal supervisions has been inconsistent. Staff did comment however that they feel well supported and can discuss any concerns or issues with managers at any time.

Monitoring processes within the home take place regularly. Monthly visits are undertaken by the independent visitor who ensures the views and experiences of the young people and visiting parents are sought. The reports are informative and detail clear action points for the manager to address. However, there is inconsistent reviewing of records relating to trends and patterns of behaviour. This limits the independent visitors' ability to be fully assured that young people's wellbeing is reliably promoted. The manager's monitoring is completed on a regular basis and forwarded to Ofsted in line with legislation. However, the information within these reports is varied and outcomes are not always clearly defined to identify areas for improvement.

Outcomes in education and related learning activities

good

The quality of young people's education has been maintained since the last inspection. Weaknesses identified then have been addressed well through strong action taken by the head teacher with effective support from the local authority. Education outcomes for young people are good.

Young people make good progress over the period of their stay. Given the severe disruption to their education which they have previously encountered, the stability and structure in the home provides a good backdrop for their education. They enjoy their time in education and value the support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Over a relatively short period they gain confidence and develop their social and personal skills well which they begin to apply within education to good effect. All achieve some form of nationally recognised vocational qualification.

Young people make good progress in English and mathematics relative to their starting points. They welcome the emphasis placed within school on developing skills to prepare for employment and engage well. The priority given to education within the institution helps support young people's good attendance and a well-ordered environment. The standards of work that young people produce are often good, in particular in art where they produce high quality portfolios of their studies.

Detailed initial assessments are undertaken promptly. These identify a significantly broad range of learning and social needs and levels of prior attainment among the young people. Assessments are used effectively to plan a curriculum for each individual that caters well for their needs. As a result young people settle quickly in education. In the main teachers use this knowledge well to plan their teaching but, in a minority of instances, the more able young people are not working to their full potential.

Teachers monitor progress systematically and most young people are aware of the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve. Young people talk enthusiastically about their progress and what they have learnt. Embryonic work on tracking young people's destinations on leaving the home indicate the good impact education places on their longer-term progress.

Teachers are patient and attentive to the needs of young people. They adopt classroom strategies which result in purposeful learning. In the best instances they actively engage the young people immediately on entry to the room, modify the pace of lessons, achieve a good balance between discussion, group work and written tasks and have alternative ideas readily to hand if needed. They frame questions and set tasks appropriate to the needs of individuals and which challenge the more able. Learning objectives for the lesson are straightforward and clear and expressed in a manner which young people can relate to. Accreditation is

deftly incorporated into lessons, for instance in English and cookery, allowing young people to log their progress in a structured manner.

Teachers use praise and encouragement to ensure that most young people stay on task. This supports the calm and purposeful learning environment within which lessons take place. Teachers and care staff manage young people moving between lessons well. Celebrations of achievement feature often in lessons, weekly assemblies, student awards and through vibrant displays throughout the home. These are appreciated by young people.

Teaching assistants are integral to the work of education and add significant value to learning. They support well the good outcomes that young people achieve. They understand the imperative for young people to work independently in the classroom, and based on the knowledge they have of young people's social and learning needs, making well-judged interventions. Teachers and teaching assistants complementary roles help secure a constructive and safe classroom environment. Care staff contribute effectively to the learning environment through their discreet presence on-site during the education day.

In the few weaker sessions teachers are more rigid in their approach with a tendency to follow a path of poorly defined learning objectives that are not understood by young people. Sufficient care is not always taken to ensure that the required self-assessment student monitoring form is completed fully and purposefully. This renders it of little value to young people's learning. In the weaker examples functional English and mathematics are not sufficiently embedded in lessons and teachers miss opportunities to develop further young people's skills, knowledge and understanding in these areas.

In the main young people behave well during lessons and teachers manage poor behaviour effectively. This is assisted by good information sharing between care and education staff at daily handover meetings. The low key, understated approach of teachers prevents disruptive behaviour in the classroom escalating. Teachers use 'points and rewards' to manage behaviour discreetly and to good effect. As a result young people stay in lessons and make good progress. In a minority of occasions where there is low level disruption teachers sometimes spend too long dealing with these incidents. This interrupts the learning of others and slows their progress in classes.

Following the previous inspection, art has been strengthened and good work is being done to consolidate the specialist teaching of core subjects. The vocational programme is good and young people speak highly of it. Links are developing with local employers to broaden the vocational offer. Most young people participate in some kind of work experience, with opportunities in horse care and horticulture for example. A dedicated period on Monday afternoons for simulated 'in-house' work experience has given the young people the chance to work together in putting in place all of the elements of a successful whole school Easter event.

All young people engage purposefully in a good variety of activities after the education day. The vast majority of young people take part in at least one club each week. The breadth of these activities has increased since the last inspection. Care and education staff work effectively together to plan activities that enrich young people's experience outside of the education day. A performance of 'Romeo and Juliet' by a local theatre group was enhanced by a learning resource pack produced by education staff. Staff respond well to young people's views on activities that take place out of education. Dance and singing have been introduced during the holiday programme as a direct result of young people identifying these as areas of interest.

Given the transient nature of a young person's education within the home, the curriculum is rightly a source of on-going professional debate among teachers' and managers. Moreover, the lack of confidence shown by many young people often manifests itself as strong resistance to certain subjects or to 'trying something new'. Where teachers are developing or revising schemes of work and resources in subject areas, they have limited access to other respective subject communities or to curricular expertise.

As at the last inspection the resources used to support learning are good. Classrooms are spacious and information computer technology is often used effectively by teachers during lessons. However, the popular fitness suite is currently not in use and this limits both the physical education curriculum and the enrichment offer to young people.

Good oversight by the head teacher and thoughtful innovation bolster the curriculum. For instance, great efforts are made to ensure that courses and units are properly completed prior to leaving. Education reports produced at the end of a young person's stay act as a good planning document for their next school, or college. Reports are copied to social workers and the virtual school. The reports include suitably detailed notes of progress in subjects, targets and comments on a young person's personal and social development. They also contain a bespoke careers action plan. Young people's course work is carefully collated for them to take away.

Young people receive good support in their education through the tutorial system. A 'parents evening' has been recently introduced. This is an effective innovation whereby a young person and her dedicated care worker attend a 'parents evening' to review their progress. Good quality individual support helps secure the good progress that young people make, including those with additional learning needs. In one-to-one sessions a good balance of questioning, praise and encouragement helps build young people's confidence and skills.

Young people are supported well to take their next steps in learning. A newly developed life-skills programme is tailored effectively to the needs of individual

young people. The programme supports the development of practical skills and builds young people's confidence such for example in using public transport. Careers guidance is an integral part of the curriculum and monthly guidance sessions take place which all young people participate in.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
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Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
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Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
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Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.
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Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.

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