

Inspection report for children's home

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC035500
<b>Inspector</b>	Kevin Whatley
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Full
<b>Provision subtype</b>	Secure Unit

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<b>Registered person</b>	South Gloucestershire Council
<b>Registered person address</b>	Department for Children & Young People PO Box 2082 BRISTOL BS35 9BQ
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Peter Murphy
<b>Registered manager</b>	Keith Paul Smith
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	05/03/2014

<b>Inspection date</b>	09/09/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

<b>This inspection</b>	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

## **Overall effectiveness**

Judgement outcome	<b>good</b>
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## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is operated by a local authority and is approved by the Secretary of State to restrict young people's liberty. Education is provided on site.

The children's home can accommodate up to 24 young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. Up to 24 young people who have received a custodial sentence can be placed at this home by the Youth Justice Board. Other young people, subject of Section 25 of The Children Act 1989, can be placed by local authorities, with agreement from the Youth Justice Board. Admission of any young person under section 25 of The Children Act 1989 who is 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
05/03/2014	Interim	good progress
17/09/2013	Full	good
20/02/2013	Full	good
02/10/2012	Interim	good progress

### 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
17B (2001)	ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any sanction, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose, of which shall include the effectiveness and consequence of the use of the measure. (Regulation 17B(3)(f))	30/10/2014

## Recommendations

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

- ensure that where there has been physical restraint, children are always given the opportunity to be examined by a registered nurse or medical practitioner; specifically, ensure records of physical restraint evidence this is the case (NMS 3.16)
- ensure that where sanctions or disciplinary measures are used, children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records kept by the home (NMS 3.18)
- ensure that when children have been placed in single separation a detailed record is kept; specifically, the record shows the observed behaviour or state of the young person and demonstrates whether the criteria for single separation continue to be met (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, Paragraph 2.107)
- review and revise the home's absconding procedures so that they are compatible with and have regard to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures maintained and managed by the police or by the local authority for the area where the home is located (NMS 5.6 and Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014)
- ensure that written records kept by the home when a child absconds detail all action taken by staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons given by the child for absconding, and any action taken in the light of those reasons and considers the issues set out in statutory guidance (NMS 5.10 and Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014)
- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated; in particular that outside areas are kept tidy and free from debris (NMS 10.3)
- ensure all staff, volunteers and the registered person, are properly managed, supported and understand to whom they are accountable; in particular that when shortfalls in staff practice are identified opportunities are taken to robustly address and improve such shortfalls within formal supervision (NMS 19.2)
- implement fully the policy relating to the individual searches of young people; specifically, ensure records of Level 4 searches demonstrate the risk and justification for such searches. (NMS 23.3)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people are achieving good outcomes in all areas of their lives. A significant reason for this is the quality of the relationships formed quickly between staff and young people. This gives young people re-assurances which helps them to settle. This was summed up by one young person saying; 'I wasn't sure at first, but it's a lot better than I expected.'

Young people benefit from receiving high quality care and intervention from staff who understand their needs. Young people speak positively of staff and the support they receive from them. As they settle, young people start to experience achievement which boosts confidence. This gives them a greater sense of perspective regarding their past life and helps them to develop enhanced levels of confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. For example, during the final review for one young person about to leave, the range of options open to them educationally had significantly improved. This was due to consistently high attendance and educational achievement, along with full participation in the various programmes provided.

The organisation and arrangements to promote young people's health are good. The nurse practitioner is well established and has grown into the role since the previous inspection, resulting in a number of improvements being made. For example, a new health promotion structure targeted specifically at young people receiving short sentences has been introduced. This structure is combined into a young person's health plan, ensuring their basic health needs are being met within the time available.

In addition to this, the home has retained strong links with external services which ensures young people's day to day health needs are being met. The home also has the facilities and ability to provide for more specialised input to address complex needs a young person may have. Health promotion is strong with a range of initiatives in place to encourage young people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. This includes healthy eating, weight management, fitness, sexual health as well as substance and alcohol misuse. As a result, young people's physical, emotional and psychological health needs are being well met.

Education within the home was not formally inspected on this occasion. A further inspection is due within this inspection cycle where education inspectors will look at and fully assess the education provision. However, evidence was provided to show that attendance levels are extremely good and that young people generally make good progress. Compared to the previous year, the number of accredited qualifications gained by young people has risen sharply.

Young people contribute positively to aspects of their daily life in the home and can affect change. Positive feedback was received from young people who act as

representatives for other young people. They meet regularly with the Registered Manager to promote young people's views and make requests for change. This has met with positive responses and resulted in: cooked breakfast on Saturday's, more small animals around the campus and an increased range of stock available in the tuck shop.

Young people are encouraged and supported to maintain contact with those people who are important to them and have easy access to independent advice services. No issues or concerns were raised by young people regarding contact arrangements with family and friend visits being encouraged and fully supported. Young people confirm they have access to telephones along with the contact details for external agencies, should they need to speak to someone independently. The home is visited weekly by an independent advocate who takes an active role in the home and is well established.

The arrangements for preparing young people for transition and developing skills to promote a more independent lifestyle are good. Young people benefit from a co-ordinated approach to transition and independence. The dedicated education and social care staff work cohesively with advocacy services, to find the best outcome for young people as they move back into the community. This includes advocating on their behalf when necessary, and working in partnership with community based agencies to assist in transition planning and implementation.

The home has some excellent facilities to promote independence such as workshops and a life skills lodge. Careers advice and an active work experience programme complement the recently expanded mobility programme. As a result, young people are prepared for transition back into the community through a range of experiences which link to the development of practical skills. These skills are transferable and useful for when young people leave the home.

## **Quality of care**

**outstanding**

The quality of care given to young people remains outstanding. They benefit from a staff group that has the commitment, skills and abilities to assist and encourage them into making significant changes to their attitudes, behaviours and lifestyle. This is recognised by the external sources spoken with during the inspection. One social worker said, 'Staff have done a great job with him. 100% education attendance, good educational achievement and improved attitudes means he can now look to the future with some confidence.' Another stated, 'overall the home has offered her a warm and nurturing environment of which she has responded to positively.'

Staff are very skilled at settling young people and developing meaningful and trusting relationships with them. These relationships are sustained and often remain intact during times of unrest, disruption and challenge. Staff act as good role models which give young people insight and examples to show them there are alternative ways to

resolve conflict. Feedback from young people about staff is positive with one saying, 'It's been alright here. I have done some good things and people have helped me.' Another said, 'staff listen, care and you can have a laugh.'

The inclusive environment in which young people live is designed to allow them to put forward ideas, thoughts and requests about certain aspects of the homes' operation and to contribute positively to daily life. For example, since the previous inspection, a peer mentoring system has been introduced. This system gives responsibility to more established young people to mentor and support young people when first admitted.

The selection system for mentors is astute in recognising those qualities needed to be a good mentor. Not only are young people new to the home being well supported, those mentoring develop relationship and negotiation skills which gives them greater confidence and self-esteem. Although areas remain for development, this scheme is a good example of the way the home looks to move forward and improve the care given to young people. Such an approach includes allowing young people who otherwise had been disruptive, the opportunity to take on higher levels of responsibility which in turn they have embraced wholeheartedly.

The home has its own care plans which complement the statutory documentation demanded by external sources. This high quality planning document covers all the areas required as young people journey through the home towards transition. It is reviewed regularly to keep it current and clearly identifies the individual needs of a young person, along with the strategies and plans put into place to address those needs. Records of events and work undertaken are contained in the document which gives an excellent insight into the progress being made and to the areas that require attention.

Young people understand how to make a complaint and are confident to do so. They confirm they understand how to access the system and raised no issues or concerns about the current organisation or implementation of the system.

A highly motivated staff group, rich in its own diversity, ethnicity, age and gender has the skills, knowledge and commitment to meet the diverse needs of young people. They live in an inclusive, non-judgemental environment, which allows young people to retain and celebrate their identity, culture and religious beliefs without prejudice. Recent events have included celebrating diversity through dance with different cultures being considered with themed weeks and presentations.

Young people are introduced to a range of activities and leisure interests that promote a healthy lifestyle as well as giving them opportunities to explore and develop new skills. Along with facilities provided around the environment, a particular strength of the home is its willingness to bring in activities from outside that give new experiences to young people. Recent activities have included a visit by birds of prey as well as a traveling zoo. Football coaches are regular visitors to the home providing

structured coaching for young people of either gender.

Staff are sensitive and committed to meeting individual need and strive to find inventive ways to assist young people. For example, for one young person who was finding it difficult to settle and participate fully in the daily life of the home. Staff became aware of the young person's deep interest in dogs. As a result, contact was made with a voluntary service that provides visits with a dog as a therapeutic approach to communicating and breaking barriers for those who struggle to express feelings easily. Following the success of the first visit to the young person, this has now been turned into a weekly activity and has opened up lines of positive communication and interaction that was lacking previously. Staff have noted a significant improvement, with the young person engaging more readily and in the development of greater self-confidence. This is deemed to be an imaginative and outstanding example of the steps the home is prepared to take to meet individual need.

A tour of the premises shows the homes location, design and size supports 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. Living areas have recently been decorated with colour schemes chosen by young people.

### **Keeping children and young people safe    good**

Young people said they are safe and feel safe and did not raise any concerns about bullying. Bullying incidents do occur; however these tend to be low-level and are always recorded and fully addressed. Work is undertaken with perpetrators, such as bullying programmes, so they understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Where appropriate, sanctions and restorative practices are also used. Good support is also provided to victims and their views are always carefully considered.

On admission to the home, each young person needs are robustly assessed with regards to any vulnerability. Risk assessments are developed specific to each individual. Once developed, these are shared with all staff across the centre and are available to them for review at any time. Reviews of risk assessments take place formally each week by a multi-disciplinary team to ensure they are robust and reflective of young people's needs. Any concerns that emerge at any time with regard to suicide or self-harm are reviewed by the duty manager and relevant staff and the risk assessment updated accordingly. These processes are well-embedded and ensure that young people are supported to stay safe.

Appropriate systems are in place to monitor young people and the standards of care they receive during the night. These have been further improved by upgrading the quality of CCTV coverage around the home. The management team are mindful of the importance of night time care and supervision and robustly review the quality of



support provided during these hours. When necessary appropriate action is taken to support staff to improve practice. As a result young people receive consistent care and are suitably safeguarded.

The home has policies and procedures for random and routine searches of communal areas and bedrooms, and for the individual searching of young people in order to promote safety and wellbeing. Regular searches take place of bedrooms and communal areas and records evidence the frequency and what is found along with any action taken. The policy relating to individual searches has varying levels that are applied depending on circumstances and known risk. These range from level 1, which is turning out pockets, to level 4, where young people put on a dressing gown and they are searched by a pat down and electronic wand. Level 4 searches are always authorised by a senior manager. Although the policy is fully implemented, the records relating to level 4 searches are not always robust. They do not always provide sufficient detail to show the risks and rationale that lead to the decision to undertake this type of search.

Child protection matters are dealt with fully and robustly by managers. Any concerns that come to light are actioned swiftly to ensure young people are safeguarded. Matters are referred to relevant professionals and agencies and all actions are taken in line with the home's policy and procedure. Full records are kept of any incidents and the outcome. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and their role in keeping young people safe and have had recent updated child protection training, which they felt was very relevant to their work and supports them in helping to keep young people safe.

There are good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The Registered Manager is a member of the Board. The Registered Manager has recently taken extended leave and the assistant manager has maintained this link and will be attending the next Board meeting. There are strong links with the local authority designated officer (LADO). The LADO has oversight of any allegations against staff. The LADO also visits the home regularly and reviews restraint practices and incidents via CCTV. This provides external and independent scrutiny of practices and procedures at the home, which further helps to safeguard young people and supports improvement.

There has been one incident where a young person has absconded since the last inspection. This occurred while attending an approved and agreed health appointment in the local community. All relevant professionals and agencies were contacted immediately and the young person was found and returned to the home very quickly. The incident was subsequently reviewed by managers and relevant actions taken. A record was made of the incident; however this record does not include matters such as, the date, time and circumstances of return, the young person's reasons for absconding and any action taken. In addition, the home's procedure does not state these matters require recording.

Staff encourage positive behaviour and have good relationships with young people providing good role models. There is an incentive scheme in place which young people fully understand and this helps them to improve their behaviour and social skills. The system has different levels and young people make progress through the scheme by earning points for good behaviour. Points earned lead to the level of rewards and privileges young people are entitled to. The levels go from blue to platinum with increased rewards and privileges the higher level young people achieve and this reinforces positive behaviours.

Where young people's behaviour is negative or inappropriate, staff use sanctions or restorative justice. These are always recorded. Although managers monitor the use of any sanctions to ensure they are having the desired effect, records do not show the effectiveness of the measure. Additionally, records do not provide young people with the opportunity to comment on measures used in order to help them to reflect on their behaviour and to develop understanding and responsibility.

There are times when physical restraint has been required. There is a restraint minimisation strategy and a clear policy that shows restraint is only to be used in line with the criteria set out in the policy, which is commensurate with regulations. Clear and robust records are kept of every incident. A staff member not involved in a restraint spends time with young people gaining their views on the incident. Managers review incidents through scrutiny of records and the use of CCTV to ensure practice is appropriate. The LADO attends monthly meetings with managers and also reviews all incidents providing independent scrutiny of practices. Young people are able to see a health professional after an incident of physical restraint. However records kept by the home do not show that young people have been offered this opportunity and what their decision was and the outcome.

Single separation is used in accordance with relevant government guidance. The home's policy and practices reflect this guidance and records are kept of any measure used. Managers monitor any use of single separation to ensure it is appropriate and in the rare event of any incident lasting more than three hours, a senior manager's authorisation and oversight is always required. Young people are observed at least every five minutes when separated; however records do not always show that during an incident, the criteria are under constant review and observations of the young person's state during this time.

Staff have been recruited since the last inspection. The home has a clear process for recruitment of new employees and this ensures that all relevant and required checks are undertaken before they start work at the home. This ensures that the right people are employed to work with vulnerable children.

**Leadership and management**

**good**

An effective and efficient management team ensure the needs of young people remain the paramount concern in running the home. The Registered Manager has a wealth of experience and appropriately disseminates responsibilities to his senior management team resulting in a home where there is strength in depth regarding leadership and guidance. This has been most apparent in the smooth running of the home during the Registered Manager's current period of agreed extended leave; he is due to return in November. Comments from parents, social workers, youth offending service staff, the Youth Justice Board and indeed young people themselves, confirmed the home is being well managed with the wellbeing of young people clearly in mind.

The home's Statement of Purpose is appropriate and kept up to date to reflect the current aims and objectives of the service; the home is meeting these in practice. Information provided to young people and others accurately describes the levels of care, support and intervention on offer and how these will be provided. Young people are clear about the reasons for being placed at the home and of their current and future care plans.

The management team work well together and convey an ethos where appropriately high expectations of staff practice is fundamental. A forward thinking approach ensures that new and innovative ways of working are considered wherever possible resulting in a vibrant culture where aspirations to improve further are embraced. For example the increase in the involvement of animals and pets as a therapeutic intervention, increases in the number of mobility's and community engagement projects and full implementation of a peer mentoring scheme.

A suitable complaints procedure is in place which is followed in practice. When complaints are received they are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner. Young people's complaints are responded to swiftly with clear actions and outcomes being recorded and conveyed to the young person concerned. Where young people have been unsatisfied with responses, the management team have pro-actively escalated the issues to a senior complaints officer within the local authority. This has been particularly useful for those young people who complain regularly, with the officer visiting them in person to discuss their concerns; this process confirmed the home had followed all due processes correctly. The wide availability of advocacy services for young people further enhances their ability to raise concerns via an independent route.

The home is monitored effectively to ensure standards of care are maintained, reviewed and evaluated on a routine basis both internally and independently. Quarterly Regulation 34 reports are compiled by the management team which provide a retrospective assessment of service provision including identifying trends in positive practice and areas where further improvement is needed. The reports help the management team to confirm the strengths of service provision and evaluate areas where more emphasis may be required to improve outcomes. Since May of this year the home engaged the services of a suitably qualified and experienced

independent person to complete the required monthly Regulation 33 inspections. The subsequent reports provide an objective review of care, which include the views of young people and other stakeholders. Such an approach enables the management team to receive a suitably independent critique of the running of the home.

In general the management team ensure the home environment is well maintained both inside and out. However debris was found to litter some outdoor areas which culminated in a number of unsightly corners where rubbish had gathered. As a result some parts of the home appeared unkempt and did not promote the otherwise good standard of living environment found elsewhere.

Staff say they receive extremely good support, encouragement and guidance to fulfil their roles and develop their practice. Formal supervision occurs regularly and for the most part provides staff with a balanced approach to meeting their professional and personal aims and development. However the approach to addressing shortfalls in individual staff practice is inconsistent. Some staff who had displayed poor practice were engaged fully in addressing the areas which needed to improve, while other staff in similar situations were not. While such inconsistencies exist opportunities for staff to acknowledge and improve poor practice maybe missed.

Young people are cared for by suitable numbers of staff who are committed and appropriately trained to meet their needs. Many staff have worked at the home for some time and are experienced in caring for young people in a secure environment. Such experience is used to good effect to enable newer staff to learn and develop their confidence, skills and practice alongside competent peers. A running programme of induction and training ensures staff receive good levels of training and development opportunities. A majority of staff hold the required qualification in care, with others are currently undertaking the award. Where staff need specialist training, such as working with young people with sexually harmful behaviours, this is provided to those designated to carry out these types of interventions. Staff say they find training very useful, notably the monthly training meetings, and praised the quality and impact of recent safeguarding programmes.

The home ensures that records are suitably and securely stored. Documents such as care plans and reviews, clearly evidence the aims and objectives of their placement/sentence and record the journey and progress of the young person through the home.

When significant events occur they are notified to the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted. Where such incidents require, the home take further action and work together with other agencies to resolve problems and ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. Shortfalls identified at this inspection do not pose risks to young people.

## What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

## 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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