

## Inspection report for Children's Home

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<b>Inspector</b>	Chris Fuller
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## 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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

The school is registered as a children's home to accommodate 22 children and young people from 8 years to under 18 years. At the time of the inspection, 19 children and young people were being accommodated. The school provides education and care to children and young people who present with severe learning disabilities, challenging behaviours, autistic spectrum disorder and associated epilepsy. The school is approved and registered by the Department for Education.

The interior of the downstairs of the house is split into four main communal areas and these comprise a large lounge, a kitchen and diner with adjoining bathroom and toilet facilities. The children and young people are grouped in terms of age and compatibility. The Lodge provides accommodation for young people from 16 years to under 18 years with the remit is to provide opportunities to develop independent living skills.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

The unannounced full inspection visit of the home was made to monitor the key national minimum standards in the outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution, economic well-being and organisation. The previous inspection monitored the outcome area of staying safe and no actions or recommendations were made.

The inspection found that the home has continued to provide good quality care with two of the outcomes being outstanding. Young people enjoy a safe and stimulating environment that provides a wide range of opportunities for them to achieve positive outcomes. There are no actions, but one recommendation in respect of the Statement of Purpose being set as a result of this visit.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

This is not applicable as there were no actions or recommendations made at the previous inspection.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's health and dietary needs are very clearly identified and met. Young people are provided with a broad range of healthy nutritious meals through well-balanced and varied menus. Placing social workers state, they provide 'Excellent home cooked healthy meals, it is renowned for it's food.' All staff have received food safety training and the kitchen facilities and equipment are hygienic and well maintained. In addition, the kitchen staff have completed communication skills training so that they can fully understand the choices and preferences of young people. Staff are observant and creatively use themed events and cultural celebrations to make mealtimes a social occasion. These provide opportunities to explore new tastes and textures and extend young people's knowledge of different foods. All young people are prompted to take part in planning menus, purchasing food and preparing meals at levels that reflect their age and stage of development and individual skills and abilities.

Each young person has a detailed health care plan based on comprehensive assessments of their health care needs. Records are exceptionally well organised to be readily available for staff as working documents that are current and regularly updated. There is a well-established system for annual health assessments and all general health care appointments, such as optician and dental treatment. Professionals who work specifically with children with learning disabilities have been identified and accessed. Placing social workers state, 'Staff are excellent advocates for young people to make sure they receive prompt and appropriate treatment. High standards are maintained at all times in relation to health issues.'

Staff are vigilant in identifying any health care concerns and accessing the relevant health services. The management and staff are extremely enthusiastic about the appointment of a speech and language therapist to work with young people and staff so that communication skills are prioritised and improved. Young people are encouraged and enabled to take an interest in looking after their own health and staff promote healthy lifestyle choices. Staff ensure that any health issues that relate to ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith and belief are fully assessed in respect of each young person. These issues are explicitly stated in young people's care plans and show how they will be addressed.

Young people's health needs are met and protected by effective medication policies and procedures implemented well by competent staff. Staff clearly understand their role and responsibilities when administering medication. They receive relevant medication training, which is annually updated and their competence to administer medication assessed. Medication records were seen to be current accurate and completed in line with regulations. There is regular quality assurance monitoring of the systems and practice of staff to ensure the medication is administered safely.

## Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect the privacy and dignity of young people and information is confidentially handled. A parent stated, 'I feel that the service provides individualised holistic care. The needs of young people are very well understood and supported. They are open and transparent about what they provide. I am confident that my child is treated with dignity and respect at all times.'

Young people are able to raise any issues or concerns through effective formal and informal communication systems, including contact with external independent people or agencies. Young people are provided with clear information of how to make a complaint in a broad range of formats. Management and staff take all complaints seriously and respond quickly to address issues as they arise. All complaints are dealt with appropriately within timescales and the complainant is always informed of the progress and outcome of the complaint.

The welfare of young people is consistently promoted; young people are well protected from abuse, and appropriate responses are made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The home has a range of policies and procedures for all safeguarding practices in respect of child protection, countering bullying, absence of a child without authority and notification of significant events. Improvements have been implemented to the incident report writing and documentation so that records are easily cross-referenced from general records to young people's individual files. A visiting educational professional stated, 'I was given an opportunity to see all parts of the premises and ask all the questions I wanted to. I was satisfied that all the procedures and measures were in place to safeguard students.' Management and staff complete training in a wide range of child protection and safeguarding topics so that they have a clear understanding of safe care practice within the home. They develop effective working relationships with partner agencies, such as placing social workers and health staff, so that the health and welfare of young people are safeguarded.

Staff confirm that bullying rarely happens within the home as they are quick to act on any information or observation of bullying taking place. Risk assessments are completed to identify any potentially harmful or offensive behaviour and how these can be monitored and addressed with each young person. Staff demonstrate high levels of insight and understanding of the group dynamics and are extremely observant of rapid changes in individual young people's mood and behaviour. High staffing levels frequently facilitates one-to-one working and close supervision of young people, which means staff are able to successfully mitigate against bullying becoming an issue.

Young people who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance. There are clear local police protocols in place for missing young people ensuring a high level of response due to vulnerability of young people. There have been no incidents of young people missing from the home. The staff

demonstrate they work effectively with young people to reduce absconding and keep them safe. Young people have a wide range of very complex needs and staff consult closely with the school staff team so that their strategies are consistent, complimentary, reinforce positive behaviour and promote the health and safety of young people.

Behaviour management policies and procedures are comprehensive, regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they support staff in implementing safe practice and positive parenting of young people. The service has two in-house dedicated physical intervention instructors who make sure all of the staff are competent to manage challenging behaviour. There is excellent communication with placing social workers and parents regarding any physical interventions so that an independent person is regularly updated of the progress of young people and any issues arising. Similarly there are clear records of any sanctions used which shows these are only applied where they are clearly understood by the young person and relevant to the incident. Where appropriate young people are encouraged to write their comments and sign the records. The home has a wide range of effective behaviour management strategies in place and reviews these with the young people and or their placing social workers to ensure they remain purposeful and meaningful.

Young people's health, welfare and safety are protected by a range of well-written health and safety policies, procedures and guidance. There is good evidence that all the necessary health and safety checks are completed to maintain a safe secure and stimulating environment. Risk assessments are completed for a broad range of topics including activities in the community so that young people are enabled to take reasonable risks and engage in independent activities and extend their social experiences. Young people are well informed of the importance of keeping themselves safe through daily instruction and demonstration by staff of health and safety strategies.

The home has an established thorough and effective system for the vetting and supervision of visitors. The management implement a robust system for the recruitment of suitable staff to work with young people.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The young people are consistently given individual support in all aspects of their identified needs and wishes. Staff can meet a wide range of young people's potential needs. Such needs include disability, race, gender, belief, religion, sexual orientation, language and culture. Parents assist staff to develop personal packages of care through sharing information relating to the personal preferences and cultural traditions of young people. Specialist services and resources are accessed where necessary and young people benefit from direct access to a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and are constantly engaged in a variety of activities that reflect their individual needs and age and stage of development.

The setting provides excellent school facilities on site with purpose-built premises and high standards of facilities and resources. The staff effectively support and enable young people to extend their learning and development through a broad range of learning opportunities so that they make educational attainments. Staff are creative and innovative in the involvement of skilled specialists from the community to engage young people in projects so that they learn new skills. A placing social worker stated, 'Young people I supervise have made significant progress during the twelvemonths of their placement in respect of their behaviour and education. They are now sitting in the classroom and achieving and attending health and hair dresser appointments.' The staff are highly motivated to positively engage young people and reinforce progress made through celebration of their achievements.

Young people are given support and encouragement to participate in an extensive range of leisure activities and personal hobbies or interests. The setting has considerable resources and facilities of excellent quality both within the house and school and outside in the garden and grounds. As a result young people's opportunities for exploring new skills and experiences in a safe environment are maximised. A parent stated, 'Staff understand triggers and are able to manage behaviours effectively so that my child is able to explore and engage with the wider community. My child attends youth club, swimming lessons and enjoys lots of other activities such as eating out and day trips to zoos.'

Staff develop effective individual education and activities programmes to promote young people's learning, confidence and self-esteem. Staff are creative and innovative when introducing new activities ranging from signing puppets to song and music games both promoting communication skills and self-confidence. Young people also have access to a game console, music and a good supply of DVDs. They gain experience of nature and outdoor activities through planting and maintaining a vegetable garden and woodland walks. Young people are animated, alert and enthusiastic about the different activities provided. This is clearly shown through their participation and the many photograph displays of different events.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people make excellent progress because the effective implementation of personal placement plans.

Staff clearly outline the individual needs and wishes of the young people in detailed placement plans. Young people benefit from comprehensive and exceptionally detailed plans that address all aspects of their daily living. This includes their personal, social, emotional and physical care needs ensuring that their welfare is fully met.

Young people's placement plans are based on comprehensive assessments and are regularly reviewed and updated. Review documents include an accessible version for young people so that they are given the opportunity to be involved in decision

making about their future. A parent states, 'We have a review three times a year to discuss my child's educational needs and progress. The curriculum activities are adjusted to my child's needs so that my child can follow the curriculum and achieve goals and targets.' Young people are enabled to make meaningful contributions to the review process and their views and preferences are sought so that they may participate in decision making about plans for their future.

Staff support and nurture positive relationships with relatives, friends and placing authority staff so that young people maintain and increase their social networks. Clear records of contact arrangements are kept current and any changes noted so that young people are prepared appropriately for their contact. In addition the staff use an extensive range of communication mediums to facilitate contact. This proves to be of particular value where distance from home may potentially limit the regularity of contact.

The management and staff make every effort to ensure a smooth transition for young people moving into and out of the home. The primary objective of the service is to ensure that care planning is centred around the needs of young people. Staff work closely with parents to develop a personal profile of a young person prior to their placement so that they are able to respond effectively and reassure young people and ease their transition. In addition good practice is applied through a settling-in review shortly following placement and again in three months so that any shortfalls in service delivery can be addressed.

The provider has demonstrated a high level of commitment to improving services and recognises the importance of communication with young people. A speech and language therapist has been appointed and works closely with staff and young people to increase communication skills and find creative ways to actively engage young people. An education professional states, 'Children and young people are asked their opinions in a variety of ways that takes into account their learning difficulties.' Young people benefit tremendously from expressing their personal preferences through menus planning, personalisation of their rooms and selection of activities. Young people are consistently and regularly consulted, formally and informally regarding their needs and wishes and given an opportunity to influence the running of the home.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Staff support and encourage young people to develop independent living skills. Young people are given opportunities to take part in the daily household tasks, such as shopping, preparation of meals, laundry and tidying their own rooms. The staff develop a plan for each young person moving towards adulthood and addresses any issues that arise out of the young person's ethnicity, race, disability sexuality, faith or belief. This complements and reinforces any pathway or transition plan provided by the placing authority. Staff enable the young people to access local services and community events to extend and promote their personal and social skills. The staff

work well in partnership with other agencies to achieve positive outcomes for young people.

The children's home is a pleasant detached property in gardens and grounds. It is well maintained and there are a good range of facilities and resources. Young people clearly enjoy the facilities available to them and take pleasure in personalising their own bedroom. The home has access to a range of community facilities and resources for health, education, recreation and leisure. The space, facilities and grounds meet the requirements for accommodation and provide a safe secure environment for young people.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The individual needs of young people are addressed well, regarding personal, social and cultural issues. This is demonstrated, for example, individual care packages, staff training and relationships with young people. An educational professional stated, 'Staff take a great deal of care to ensure they know about young people and their families so that cultural needs are addressed such as provision of food and visits to the temple.' Staff receive training in equality and diversity and demonstrate an awareness and understanding of issues that affect the quality of life for young people.

The Statement of Purpose reflects the service provided and is reviewed annually and updated. However, it did not clearly state the age group of young people the home is registered to accommodate. The manager took action to amend the document during the period of the inspection to make it accurate. The welcome guide for young people is readily accessible and available in a wide range of different formats.

Staff are well supported through regular individual supervision sessions. Individual development is promoted through annual staff appraisals producing individual personal development plans. Staff are well motivated and enthusiastic about the work they do with young people. The service has a strong management team with a wide range of experience and skills. Staff confirm that they are available and approachable.

Staff are encouraged and supported to attain qualifications. There are extremely good results with 84% of the staff achieving National Vocational Qualifications and new staff enrolled and others due to complete. The management have implemented the Children's Workforce Development Council induction training so that all staff have a standard foundation for their practice. Staff attend a broad range of training to achieve and maintain competency in their care practice. This is provided through a comprehensive training programme covering all safe working topics and child care practice courses.

The young people benefit from the individual care provided by a dedicated, permanent staff group. Continuity of staffing is achieved by nominated teams

working in specified units so that young people know who their carers are. There are high staffing levels on each shift based on comprehensive risk assessments to ensure there are sufficient staff to provide good quality care for young people. The staff provide consistent, stable care in a safe, secure, stimulating environment for young people.

The home is regularly monitored in all aspects of service delivery by management and by an independent visitor. Management are very proactive in developing services and demonstrate a commitment to providing good quality care for young people. They have produced a five year plan in conjunction with the provider and consultation with young people and staff. There are clear objectives and excellent progress is being made in fulfilling the stated targets. Appropriate action is taken to achieve compliance and maintain quality of care within the home.

Young people's records are held secure and confidential and cover all matters required in the regulations. Young people make good progress because of the effective management systems that are in place.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

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

- ensure the home has a Statement of Purpose which accurately describes what the home sets out to do for children it accommodates, such as the age group of young people accommodated. (NMS 1.1)