

Inspection report for children's home

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Inspector	Caroline Jones
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Service information

Brief description of the service

This children's home is one of a number of homes operated by a charitable trust. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

Young people thrive in a homely and nurturing environment that supports them in making good progress in all aspects of their lives. Staff assist young people effectively to develop their independence and provide a good range of opportunities to encourage their participation in society. Young people are safe living at the home and parents and partner agencies are very complementary about the service. Consultation between staff, young people and their parents is excellent and their views are sought to influence service development. Young people's parents comment: 'I am delighted with the care; it is a home from home.'

Young people are central to care planning and tailored placement plans ensure that they are cared for consistently according to their personal needs. Staff have high aspirations for young people and are enthusiastic and committed to ensuring they succeed. Staff value the importance of building relationships with young people; consequently young people are well settled and enjoy time with staff. Excellent relationships with partner agencies and parents are the bedrock of the work with young people in ensuring their needs are at the forefront of practice.

The home is effectively and efficiently run by a passionate and dedicated Registered Manager who emphasises high standards of care. Good quality assurance monitoring scrutinises the quality of care and development plans are in place to continually improve the service to young people. Shortfalls are identified in relation to the children's guide and the emergency evacuation process. These have not impacted negatively upon young people's welfare to date.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the children's guide is available through suitable alternative methods of communication (NMS 13.6)
- ensure that there is a written emergency escape plan that all staff and young people are familiar with. (NMS 10.9)

Outcomes for children and young people

Outcomes for young people are **good**.

Young people make good progress across all aspects of their development. For example, since living at the home young people are now able to attend to their own personal care needs and eat a varied diet. Young people who do not communicate verbally actively participate in decisions about their daily life through established techniques including, such as, pictorial exchange. As a result their independence is maximised. The transition for some young people to adult services provision has been delayed; however, staff continue to champion young people's needs to ensure their best interests are secured.

Young people are in good health and staff promote healthy living and their social development.

Young people participate in regular activities despite barriers within society. Staff champion their rights and young people take part in activities of their choice including: walking, ice skating, swimming, day trips, youth club, parties, awards ceremonies and bike-riding. This promotes young people's confidence and self-esteem. Young people have regular contact with their families and staff fully support this through partnership working.

Young people benefit from education that is targeted to meet their individual needs. They have an excellent record of school attendance and make progress. Staff value young people's educational advancement and assist them with learning opportunities outside of school including, educational day trips, arts and crafts. Young people are part of their community and are involved in local fund raising events. They also use the local shops and amenities which provides belonging and acceptance.

Quality of care

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

Young people flourish in a calm, nurturing and supportive environment. Staff have a

thorough understanding of young people's individual needs and placement plans are clear, detailed and subject to frequent review. Equality and diversity is well established within the home's culture and practice is underpinned by fairness irrespective of difference. Partner agencies comment: 'I am impressed with the care and progress made with young people, staff are extremely knowledgeable.' All this contributes to the excellent standards of care received by young people.

Staff are committed to young people which is evident in the warm, positive relationships they have forged with them. These relationships provide the foundation for encouraging openness and trust for young people to express themselves. Routines are established within the home which help young people to understand their situation and what to expect from staff. For example, mutual respect between young people and staff was observed throughout the inspection and young people were relaxed in their home. Staff advocate for young people and their rights and views are promoted regularly in daily living, young people's meetings and key worker sessions. These practices help empower young people to have more control in their lives.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and social wellbeing is promoted. They engage in physical and social activities and have easy access to health care services to meet their individual needs. Young people are registered with a general medical practitioner, dentist and optician and have individual plans that target their health needs.

Medication is stored safely and records are maintained on its administration. All staff receive suitable training to support health and well-being and have a first aid qualification which ensures safer caring of young people

Young people are encouraged to pursue their individual interests and staff are active in ensuring these are fulfilled, for example, staff are working towards young people having their hair cut in a salon. The home provides a varied and balanced diet and young people assist to prepare the home's menu to encourage their understanding of nutrition and independence.

Young people are fully supported to reach their educational potential. Proactive staff work constructively with education professionals communicating regularly to promote young people's educational achievement. Staff emphasise the importance of education and provide learning experiences within the home. They also work effectively with parents to ensure young people achieve their individual potential.

Young people live in a relaxed, homely environment which blends into the residential area. The home is maintained to a very good standard. Young people have their own bedrooms that are personal to them and reflect their interests. They have space and privacy to see their family and for private time alone. Young people's personal care needs are sensitively addressed by staff. This affords respect and dignity to young people.

Safeguarding children and young people

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

Young people feel safe living at the home and their parents confirm this. Staff have a good knowledge of their safeguarding duties and have targeted training which specifically focuses upon protecting young people with disabilities. Young people also have detailed risk assessments which show that any identified risks are managed appropriately. Close supervision of young people ensures that their personal safety is maintained. There are no incidents of young people missing from home, bullying or any risk taking behaviours. These care practices ensure that young people are effectively safeguarded and protected from harm.

Staff know young people very well and have developed strategies to manage behaviour successfully. As a result no sanctions or physical interventions are used. Staff focus on de-escalation and re-direction techniques and engage sensitively with young people to assist them in working through their frustration. Staff confirm that physical intervention is only used as a very last resort and that young people's behaviour is managed in a calm, caring and supportive manner.

Young people live in a physically safe environment where they are protected by well managed health and safety procedures. Staff carry out routine health and safety checks around the home and safety and insurance certificates are up to date. Although, young people practice an emergency evacuation route, firm written plans are not in place to provide clarity for staff and young people. A robust recruitment and vetting process is in place and staff take appropriate steps to verify the identity of visitors to ensure young people are protected.

Leadership and management

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

This home is managed very well by a committed Registered Manager and deputy manager who have a wealth of experience within the area of need. The home is conducted according to the conditions set and is effective in meeting its Statement of Purpose. A children's guide is in place, however, this is not available in a full range of communication methods to secure better access for young people. Social workers are clear about the aims of the home and are fully satisfied with the service they receive. The Registered Manager stimulates the enthusiasm of staff who confirm that they are extremely happy in their work. This is also evident within the stability of the staff team.

Young people's care is scrutinised by effective systems of monitoring which include monthly visits by a designated person in accordance with regulations. Additionally, monitoring includes feedback from parents regarding the quality of care and this informs service development. The Registered Manager is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the home and plans for development of the service are in place. The one recommendation for improvement from the previous inspection has been addressed and further opportunities are now in place for young people to learn skills

for adulthood.

Staff confirm that they are fully supported and the organisation demonstrates a commitment to professional development. Staff receive regular supervision, appraisal and team meetings which further ensure their competence in caring for young people. All staff are suitably qualified and have a wealth of experience in working with young people with disabilities.

The home's written records are child friendly and provide a picture of young people's daily living. Young people's information is securely stored and shared confidentially to protect their safety and privacy. Staff fully understand young the individual and diverse needs of young people and have high aspirations for them in achieving their potential. There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the needs of young people and the team remains stable and highly motivated which provides an enjoyable living environment for young people.

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.