

Inspection report for Children's Home

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You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 home is a converted farm house in a rural community. It is within reasonable travelling distance from educational, leisure and health facilities.

The home offers services and care for up to four children and young people from 11 to 17 years of age. The young people present emotional and behavioural difficulties due to trauma they have experienced in the past.

Three young people were present in the home during the inspection. One took an active part in the inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

During this full inspection which was unannounced, all key standards were inspected. The inspection covered all outcome areas from the Every Child Matters framework. The inspection assessed the capacity of the home to promote equality and diversity.

An external professional stated of the home in a survey: 'The home performs its responsibilities towards the young people to a very high standard. Every attempt is made to ascertain the wishes and feelings of the young people and they are always invited and encouraged to participate in the meetings that affect their care. Discriminatory or racist remarks within the home are always challenged and dealt with appropriately. Any issues of bullying are responded to immediately and effectively. The home promotes diversity and equal opportunities for the young people'.

Young people in this home achieve excellent outcomes in all areas of their lives because of the outstanding practice of staff and managers in the home. Staff provide high quality support to enable young people to feel safe, to achieve their full potential and to be as healthy as possible. Young people receive excellent support to manage the transition to adulthood successfully and to enjoy their lives, talents and abilities as much as possible. The management of the home successfully supports the work of staff with young people while demanding the quality of care provided to young people continues to improve. Above all, the young people in this home make improvements in all areas of their lives because they are active participants in their own planning and care. This increases their commitment to their plans and to the home. It starts the work of enabling young people to take control of their lives and decision-making. One young person commented to the inspection that the best thing the home does is, 'Looking after us children'.

Improvements since the last inspection

No requirements or recommendations were raised following the last inspection of the home.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff provide excellent support to young people to improve their health and develop healthy lifestyles.

Young people are encouraged to be actively involved in planning meals, identifying healthy options and learning how to prepare food from scratch. They help to grow fruit and vegetables in the home's vegetable plot. Mealtimes are sociable occasions when young people and staff sit down together to enjoy their meal and chat about their day. Staff are aware that young people's emotional anxiety may be expressed through their eating habits. They address such behaviour professionally and with care to help young people to avoid serious problems with eating. As a result of these practices, the health of young people is improving and they are more likely to maintain healthy eating habits into adulthood.

Health planning is of an excellent standard. It addresses areas ranging from physical and mental health to reproductive and sexual health. Staff encourage young people to feel able to share any concerns they may have about health. Therapeutic input is available from suitably qualified staff to support the work with young people across all areas including health and emotional well-being. Young people play a full part in making plans and decisions about health. They receive highly personalised care which meets their individual needs. Staff help young people to access health professionals. These practices help young people to meet their health targets and maintain excellent health.

Staff are careful to administer medicine safely. Records and staff practice are audited and monitored to prevent poor practice. Staff help young people to understand the purpose and effects of medication. As a result, the risk of harming young people by incorrectly administering or securing medication is reduced.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff support young people to live safely in the home and the wider community. This is achieved because staff understand procedures designed to protect young people and implement them effectively. Each young person is treated as a unique individual and staff work exceptionally well with them to put in place safeguarding

arrangements which meet their own particular needs.

Staff respect young people's right to privacy and only breach it where there is genuine concern about a child or young person's safety. This helps young people to feel secure in the home.

Staff are approachable which encourages young people to feel able to express their concerns. Staff treat young people's concerns and worries seriously. They respond to them without delay which helps avoid minor matters becoming more serious. Staff also act quickly where there are any concerns about bullying or disagreements between young people. Young people understand bullying is not tolerated and they know they are expected to sort out their differences with each other in a respectful way. Young people are encouraged to discuss any issues they have with each other openly through house meetings. As a consequence of these practices, young people can feel confident staff will address their worries and will intervene to make sure they are protected from bullying.

Staff in the home demonstrate good understanding of safeguarding procedures and are competent in applying them. They attend training updates to ensure they remain familiar with processes and practices to protect young people from neglect or abuse. This increases safeguards to protect young people from harm.

Staff also work hard to help young people to keep themselves safe outside the home. They educate young people about the risks they face in the wider world and how to protect themselves from these. They assess risk carefully and ensure full information is available should the police require it when a young person goes missing. Staff have good relationships with the local police who support them in the early stages when a young person does not return home as well as when they are officially recorded as missing. Staff recognise when young people are reaching the stage when they need to be trusted with more freedom in the community. They support young people to reach this stage step by step. In this way, young people are equipped with the skills to manage their independence safely. The excellent practice of the staff in helping young people to comply with plans to keep them safe when in the wider community reduces the likelihood of them suffering harm.

Social workers express positive views about behaviour management in surveys. For example, one stated: 'The staff members use positive role modelling and incentives to promote positive behaviour of the young people which appears to work effectively'. Practice in relation to behaviour management has exemplary features. Young people play a full part in planning their behaviour management programmes. They work with staff to identify effective ways to manage their behaviour and methods to improve their own self-control. Staff seek to understand the causes of challenging behaviour and to help young people to understand these patterns themselves. Staff set clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and implement sanctions and restraints in line with these so young people know what to expect. Staff have the support of a behavioural therapist to assist them to develop effective behaviour management models for each individual young person. The behavioural therapist offers staff the opportunity to reflect on their practice and find solutions to

problems in managing or understanding behaviour. The outstanding practice of staff in involving young people directly in their own behaviour management strategies results in excellent improvements in behaviour. These achievements increase the likelihood of young people living enjoyable and sociable lives alongside others in the community, at school and in their families.

Staff securely implement measures to keep the home and its grounds safe. They carry out regular fire drills, health and safety and fire checks. Staff complete excellent risk assessments in relation to young people's known risks and fully implement strategies to protect young people. Once again, this work is carried out in collaboration with young people. This helps young people to understand the risks they face and begin to take responsibility for protecting themselves from them.

The provider operates safe staff recruitment practices which reduce the likelihood of children and young people being exposed to those who would wish to cause them harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of support young people receive to live enjoyable lives and achieve their educational potential is exemplified in the scrapbooks in which each young person compiles a record of all their achievements. These books, like displays around the home, celebrate the varied successes and talents of each young person.

Young people receive highly individualised support. Their needs in terms of gender, religion, culture and disability are built into all plans. Each young person is recognised as an individual with their own talents, hopes and aspirations. Staff work to enable each young person to reach their potential by overcoming barriers put in front of them, building self-esteem and supporting participation at school and in recreation. For example, one young person who wished to build their confidence in dealing with people in the wider community has been supported to take part in an activity outside the home and to gradually do this independently. This has contributed greatly to their self-confidence in all areas of their life. A social worker stated in a survey: 'The home promotes the social inclusion of all the young people, they are supported and encouraged to participate in fun social activities. For example, swimming, pool and youth groups'. Young people take part in a wide range of activities including creative arts projects, sport, theatre and cinema visits, ice skating and dancing. This gives young people an opportunity to enjoy themselves and to develop aspirations.

Staff encourage young people to show respect for others. They introduce them to different religions and cultures through, education, food and visits to festivals. They encourage young people to become active citizens by supporting fund raising activities and awareness days in the home and their community. Young people welcome people into their home for the annual sports day and barbeque. Staff model respectful relationships. In these ways, staff help young people to develop respect

for themselves and others.

An external professional commented of the home: 'Promoting the educational achievement of the young people is of high priority at the home'. The staff demonstrate excellent practice in supporting the education of young people. Staff liaise closely with schools and colleges to support young people. They keep up to date with young people's progress and support them to meet their educational targets. A number of staff have qualifications relating to the teaching of an education programme. This enables them to offer additional teaching and support to young people to supplement that received in schools and colleges. The home has an excellent education room which provides a place to deliver constructive learning and activities away from the main home. Young people who are not in full-time education are supported by staff to take part in timetabled education and to achieve certificated qualifications. These practices support young people to achieve their potential and reach their educational targets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff regard young people as central to decision-making and planning in the home. This child-centred approach has a positive impact on all elements of each young person's care. Through involving young people in making decisions and building plans, staff help young people to become active participants in their own care planning. This increases the likelihood of young people feeling committed to meeting their goals and contributing to community life in the home.

Staff and young people draw up and review placement plans together. They are user-friendly and support young people to understand the plans for their care and to play an active part in achieving their goals. Staff assist young people to play an active role in their local authority care planning process so that they can feel their voice is heard when decisions are being made about them. As a result of this approach to placement planning, young people take ownership of their plans, understand what is being done and frequently meet their goals.

Young people have opportunity at weekly residents meetings to express their views about how the home should be run and what changes need to be made. Staff listen to their views in everyday conversation. On a number of occasions recently, young people's views have led to changes in the home. For example, the residents' meeting day was changed, a farm building has been converted to provide a games room and a young person has been given greater flexibility with evening return times in line with their greater maturity and responsibility. Staff ensure young people are able to access someone independent of the home when they wish to do so. They make sure young people are aware of the different bodies available to listen to their concerns and complaints. These excellent practices ensure young people are involved in decisions about their lives and about the home.

Young people receive outstanding support to maintain relationships with their families. Staff support complex and demanding contact arrangements. They welcome young people's families into the home for contact visits and for special events days such as the annual sports day. Staff talk respectfully about young people's families and do not seek to undermine the importance of these relationships for young people. By supporting young people to build positive relationships with their families staff are providing young people with some of the tools required to build strong attachments and positive relationships with others in the future.

Young people move into the home in an orderly and well-managed manner which allows them to settle in as quickly as possible and understand how things run. Staff do not rush young people in the process of getting used to their new environment. They recognise different young people require different levels of support and time to make the transition. They provide highly personalised support at these transitional times. Likewise, when young people are moving out of the home, staff seek to plan the move with them carefully to enable a smooth and successful transition to their new home.

When observing the interactions between staff and young people, it is evident staff have genuine respect and affection for the young people in their care. They are patient and calm and seek to guide young people to be able to make positive decisions for themselves. The strong interpersonal relationships staff have with young people form the basis of all work carried out with young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Preparation for independence is highly individualised. Staff and young people assess individual needs to develop strategies which focus support on areas where it is most needed. All young people receive day to day support and guidance on skills which are needed in adulthood. These include domestic, financial, training and employment skills. Through the education programme staff provide additional guidance on form filling, preparing job applications, accessing libraries and other resources. In addition, young people receive individual support to meet their own particular needs. For example, young people who are not confident with other people in the wider community are supported to build their confidence and ability in this area through specific activities and increased responsibilities. Young people who struggle to manage public transport are given sustained support to build their confidence in doing so little by little. This has been extremely successful in allowing young people more independence when visiting family. Consistent and effective practice in this area ensures young people acquire the skills and confidence necessary to make a successful transition to independence.

The home is warm and welcoming. The décor and fabric of the building are of an

excellent standard. The communal areas of the home are homely and are not institutional. Young people's own tastes and interests are reflected in their bedrooms. Young people are evident throughout the home as their photographs and work are displayed around the building. Young people respect the building and serious damage is infrequent because they live in a high quality building which they do not want to damage. The home has excellent facilities for education, creative and outdoor activities. Young people can get involved in growing vegetables in the garden. The quality of the building allows young people to grow up in a healthy and homely environment.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

An external professional stated of the home: 'The home has a great team ethos. Information is shared effectively and accurately to other members of staff to keep them informed about the young people's behaviour'. The excellent management and organisation in the home securely underpins the outstanding work with young people.

The manager and staff understand the aims, purposes and ethos of the home. Information for young people, parents and social workers clearly lays out this information so that they can make good decisions about whether the home is the right place for them to live and whether staff can meet their particular needs. As a result, the home offers high levels of placement stability for young people which provides them with continuity of care and the opportunity to feel safe and secure in their home.

The staffing structure of the home is clear and designed to support the needs of the young people. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and skills through a range of training opportunities, regular supervision and team meetings. Managers encourage staff to express their views and engage in debate which provides opportunities for growth in professionalism and understanding.

There are sufficient levels of staff to enable young people to experience continuity of care which helps them to feel safe and secure with familiar people caring for them.

The management team is competent, supportive and demanding of each other. They are effective in monitoring the work of the home and its impact on outcomes for young people. They make changes to improve the quality of care experienced by young people. Effective management and quality assurance enables the home to achieve outstanding service provision over long periods of time.

The home's records are exemplary. They fully reflect the experience of the young person living in the home, their plans, aspirations and fears. They document the young person's time in the home in an accessible manner which provides an excellent record of the young person's time in the home. They evidence the very central role young people have in planning and recording. The young people's

scrapbooks help them to achieve their goals but also provide a very personal record of all the young person has done and achieved. Young people's needs, development and progress are recorded in a way which reflects their individuality.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff understand they have a duty to ensure every young persons' individuality is supported and their diverse needs met. They do not see equality and diversity as a discrete part of their work but as something which is woven into everything they do with young people. As a result, they make good assessments of young people's individual needs, put in place plans to meet these and assist young people to access the services and resources they need to meet their goals. Staff model respectful relationships to the young people and offer diverse cultural role models to the young people. This helps young people to develop respect for others. Staff recognise young people face a varied range of barriers to achievement. They help them to overcome these by providing additional support, building self-esteem, challenging discrimination and having high expectations of the young people. They provide young people with opportunities to play an active role in the community. In this way staff support young people to develop respect for others and for themselves. These outstanding practices allow staff to meet young people's diverse needs and to offer equal opportunities for all young people to meet their goals.