

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	27/02/2017
Unique reference number	1241023
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Treehouse Educare Limited
Registered provider address	Boldings Brook, Dorking Road, Warnham, Horsham RH12 3RZ

Responsible individual	Corrine Wallace
Registered manager	Sarah Chaston
Inspector	Amanda Maxwell

Inspection date	27/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	N/A
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

1241023

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- The home is providing a good quality of care to young people and they are making good progress.
- There has been a reduction in some risk-taking behaviours, with young people learning more positive coping and independence skills, which equips them well for their futures.
- Staff provide a wide variety of activities for young people to access and enjoy, some of which are activities that develop young people's strengths and interests.
- All young people are supported to engage in education and employment. Young people have been supported to seek employment and explore a variety of educational and employment opportunities.
- Young people have good relationships with those who care for them, and they have a key person whom they trust and can seek additional support from.
- The voice of the young person is present in many aspects of the home including house meetings, key-work sessions, reviews and daily activities.
- Staff are knowledgeable about young people's needs and have insight into issues that have impacted on them and their experiences.
- Staff have positive robust working relationships with other professionals involved in young people's care.
- The homes are cosy and comfortable with large outside spaces for young people to enjoy.
- The home is in its infancy, having only been registered in the summer, and some systems are not yet embedded.
- Staffing in the home has been unsettled, with many of the initial staff team having moved on to new employment. Managers are addressing this and have recruited new staff.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Employment of staff The registered person must ensure that all employees: (a) undertake continuous professional development; and (b) receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4) (a)(b))	01/05/2017
Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must prepare and implement a policy which sets out: (1)(b) how appropriate behaviour is to be promoted in the children's home. (3)(c) The registered person must ensure that within 5 days of the use of the measure, the registered person or the authorised person adds to the record confirmation that they have spoken to the child about the measure. (Regulation 35 1(b) and 3(c))	01/05/2017

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person must appoint the independent person, and is ultimately responsible for making sure that an appointment does not give rise to a conflict of interest that would, or would appear to, compromise the ability of that person to reach a rigorous and impartial judgement of the quality of that home's care. The registered provider should also ensure that the independent person they appoint has the skills and understanding necessary to relate to children in a home's care; assess all relevant information, and form an impartial judgement about the quality of the home's care.
(‘Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards’, page 65, paragraph 15.6 and 15.8)

- The registered person should only accept placements for children where they are satisfied that the home can respond effectively to the child's assessed needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, and where they have fully considered the impact that the placement will have on the existing group of children. The statement of purpose is an important document in the process of care planning as it sets out the needs of children the home is set up and equipped to care for.
(Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards, page 56, paragraph 11.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 14 young people who have learning disabilities. The accommodation is spread across four smaller houses which are located on the site. The home is in a semi-rural location within easy reach of the local community's services and provisions. It is owned and run by a private organisation which also own other services located in the vicinity of the home.

Recent inspection history

This is the first inspection of this service.

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people have made good progress while living at the home. Those who have resided in the home for several months have settled well and have formed positive relationships with staff. Young people are learning positive ways to manage their emotions and anxieties. The home is in its first year of being open and there have been limited admissions to the home. Staff spend time with young people and show a real interest in them, listening and engaging with them in a nurturing, caring way. Young people talk fondly of the care they receive while living at the home. They have good, open, honest relationships with staff and discuss concerns and aspects that worry them. Staff support young people to engage in education. They have supported young people to explore alternative education opportunities in preparation for transitions and next steps in their education. Those who are not engaged in education participate in a weekly-planned routine of meaningful activities. Staff support young people to apply and attend college interviews and seek employment opportunities. Staff encourage young people to develop their independence skills and provide education to prepare them for adulthood. They are learning about basic budgeting skills, how to keep safe when in the community, and sex education, as well as learning shopping and cooking skills. The home has a homely, comfortable feel to it. Young people have personalised their bedrooms with posters and decorations. Their (self-produced) art work is displayed in communal areas. Young people are actively involved in all aspects of decision-making. Staff regularly seek young people's views about the care they receive and consult with them about reviews and care plans. Young people complete monthly questionnaires giving feedback about what has and hasn't gone well. Staff act on concerns or issues raised and address them. For example, a young person reported their bed was uncomfortable and so staff and the young person chose a new bed which is now place. Young people are fully involved in planning the weekly menu and aspects of contributing ideas for the décor in the home. Staff offer young people regular meaningful one-to-one sessions, which afford them opportunities to explore issues which are important to them. Young people are also offered opportunities for quality one-to-one time with a member of staff, such as going to a café or just chatting about the 'ups and downs' of the week. Key workers have special relationships with young people and they are their first point of contact to support them. Staff record one-to-one sessions in the form of letters to young people to remind them of their conversations and the topics discussed.	

Staff support young people to address their basic health care needs. They support young people to access local healthcare services and seek information and advice if required. They have referred young people onto specialist health care services. Young people are encouraged to learn positive ways to self-regulate and manage their emotions, and the home offers art therapy to young people. Those who have engaged in this talk positively of its benefits for them.

Staff offer a wide variety of activities for young people in the home. For example, staff recently arranged a 'Valentine's disco' and helped young people to decorate the home in preparation for the party. Staff offer a good variety of board games and arts and crafts alongside cooking activities and movie nights. Staff support young people to access the community and attend local activities. Young people are developing their resilience and confidence while learning a wide variety of life, social and personal care skills.

Detailed plans provide clarity about each young person's needs and how to meet them. Plans focus on identified needs and detail specific approaches to support young people in developing skills. Plans detail risks and what is required to reduce and manage them. Young people and staff regularly review and update these plans.

Staff support and facilitate family contact in line with young people's care plans. Staff request reviews when required, ensuring that a plan meets the needs of the young person. Staff work openly with families ensuring that they are updated and fully informed of any issues and concerns as they arise.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Young people report feeling safe and having an adult who they can trust and confide in. They seek support and guidance from known staff when they are anxious or worried. Staff assist young people to explore ways to manage their emotions and to develop strategies and skills to enable them to work through the challenges they face. Staff provide practical advice and education to young people about the impact of risk-taking behaviours. Staff regularly remind young people of the risks associated with accessing the internet while supporting young people to take age-appropriate risks. There is a robust safeguarding culture in the home and all concerns reported and recorded, with referral to other professionals when required. Plans detail all known	

risk factors and provide practical guidance to staff about how to minimise and manage risk. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current information. Staff record all concerns and detail how and what action has been implemented.

Staff complete relevant training and have good knowledge and understanding about risk factors. Staff have insight and knowledge about each young person and plans detail how and what is required to minimise risk. Staff act swiftly when concerns arise and gain the required support to manage risks. They work collaboratively with others, ensuring that plans and approaches are applied consistently.

Young people are well informed about how to make a complaint and what to expect if the need was to arise. There have been no complaints made since registration.

There is a policy and procedure in place for staff to follow if a young person was to make an allegation about a member of staff. To date, there have been no allegations made.

Staff manage incidents well, frequently calming young people and rarely using physical intervention. When physical intervention has been used it has been in its least restrictive form for the shortest timescale possible. Staff complete detailed records of incidents that specify what occurred, and which interventions were used and for how long. Staff may offer young people an opportunity to explore their views and feelings about the incident, although this practice has not been consistent. There have been incidents which, on reflection, staff did not proactively or effectively intervene to avoid escalation of negative behaviours. These incidents then required police involvement, which could otherwise have been avoided.

Staff complete room searches if deemed necessary. When this has occurred the young person has been present and they have signed the records after the event. The record does not detail the young person's views about the search or their understanding of why it had occurred.

Staff celebrate young people's progress and achievements through rewards. They have given young people consequences following negative behaviours or incidents. These have included young people contributing financially to repairing damage to the home. Staff record these consequences and describe if it has been an effective consequence. However, staff have not recorded the young person's views.

Episodes of missing-from-home have been well managed through a coordinated approach to securing the young person's safe return. Staff work collaboratively with other agencies and follow individualised plans. Staff complete risk assessments, exploring risks associated with child sexual exploitation, and plans detail the information to consider for each young person.

Staff keep detailed records of events and request return-to-care interviews following an incident. Staff welcome young people back into the home and explore any welfare issues arising from their period of absence. The frequency and duration of missing episodes for one young person has greatly reduced. Staff provide practical education and advice to young people about risks associated with missing-from-home, and how to keep themselves safe when accessing the community.

Staff assess and consider risk, and the impact of new admissions to the home. They have accepted emergency admissions to the home which were not as robustly reviewed and considered prior to admission. These admissions were not as successful as those which have been thoroughly assessed. Due to this, managers have concluded to no longer accept emergency admissions. The impact risk assessments viewed varied in quality: one was very detailed and thorough with specific actions to manage and meet need; another was not as detailed and did not fully explore or consider all of the information in the initial referral to the home.

Staff adhere to safer recruitment practice and newly appointed staff are provided with a thorough induction to the home. They complete a probation during which their practice and knowledge is regularly reviewed and monitored. One record did not evidence that all references had been verified.

The home environment is a safe one, with all safety checks undertaken and any damage swiftly repaired. The home's location risk assessment details all known risk factors in the local area; managers are planning to review this in the light of the change to registration category.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is being managed effectively by a qualified registered manager. The home is in its first year of registration. There have been several changes in the staffing, senior leadership and oversight of the home during this period of time. Following some early problems, the provider has varied its registration category and the statement of purpose; it is now developing a learning disabilities service while still providing continuity of care to young people admitted when it did not have this specialism. This reflects the wider skills and knowledge of the parent company and senior managers. The ethos and aims of the home as described in the statement of purpose are evident in practice and through staff interactions with young people. Staff	

encourage, nurture and support young people to feel safe and develop skills to be more resilient.

The home has experienced difficulties and challenges through its development and transition. There has been a high turnover of staff in the home; managers are addressing this through the effective recruitment drive. Managers have appointed staff to the home and continue to recruit additional staff when required.

Leaders and managers are positive about the future of the home. They have implemented development and training plans to ensure that staff are experienced and skilled to meet the identified needs of the young people placed in the home. There has been an impact of carrying so many staffing vacancies. Permanent staff currently work additional hours alongside the regular use of agency staff.

The manager has good knowledge and understanding of the young people placed in the home. She has developed positive relationships with young people and their families.

Staff have not accessed regular and effective supervision since the home opened. The manager has a new system in place to address and monitor this. Staff engage and complete a wide variety of training that is specific to their role. Staff knowledge is updated via regular online and face-to-face training. Monthly team meetings have not occurred consistently. When they have occurred there has been a positive impact on staff development and knowledge.

Newly appointed staff complete an induction and probation period with additional supervision, training and support. Staff are supported to complete the care certificate during their probation period. In addition to this, staff complete a wide variety of core training. Staff either have the required qualification or are enrolled to complete it.

The manager utilises several systems and procedures to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of care provided by the home. The manager has utilised the findings from completed questionnaires, independent visits and external audits.

The independent visits have been completed by an employee from within the wider organisation who is not independent of the home. The reports have not drawn on the required knowledge and understanding of the children's homes regulations.

Leaders and managers have developed effective and good quality relationships with those outside of the home. This has been sustained through regular communication and contact. They continue to develop relationships with families, professionals, voluntary services and those in the community. The regular contact with others helps to sustain this effective, multi-disciplinary approach.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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