

SC000802

Registered provider: Arronbeth Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation, and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to four children or young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 July 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Two requirements from the previous inspection have not been met.
- The leaders and managers need to ensure that care planning is improved. Satisfactory care plans and pathway plans are not in place. Placement plans need to be more specific and need to fully detail what needs to be done to care for and support the young people living at the home. The managers also need to ensure that efforts the staff make to engage with the young people are maintained and developed further in order to promote this planning. The staff need to support the young people to engage more in education and leisure activities, and to be more part of communal living.
- The staff need to devote more time and effort to ensuring that the needs of the young people are met. This care needs to be personalised. Staff need to ensure that key work, work to develop independence skills, work around past trauma and difficulties and work around emotional and behavioural issues are included. Staff also need to encourage the young people to take up support offered by external specialist workers.
- The education needs of the young people have not been met as well as they could have been. Staff need to ensure that education placements are suitable and that education providers are challenged when they do not provide an adequate service. Issues such as this need to be resolved quickly and positively. Staff need to ensure that house routines are appropriate and support the young people to attend school. Staff need to support the young people to attend education or training placements, and need to develop a range of skills to do this.

The children's home's strengths:

- The managers are engaged in a programme of improvements and development at the home. They have employed an experienced independent visitor and have found their advice and guidance useful in this process.
- The managers have improved and developed care practices at the home. They have ensured that staff engagement with the young people has started to improve, and have begun to look more at using activities to engage the young people.
- The staff are more upbeat and enthusiastic about their work. Levels of motivation are higher and staff are keen to develop the service. Staff say the managers have encouraged this by being more involved, by sharing tasks and by improving communication. This is a good base from which the whole staff

team can move forward and offer a better service to the young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/10/2016	Full	Requires improvement
23/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
*The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their education potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff– help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 8(2)(a)(x)) In particular, challenge and work effectively with education providers and challenge and work effectively with children and young people to ensure they have the best chance to receive the best education.	19/11/2017
*The care planning standard is that children receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that children– receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)) In particular, care plans and pathway plans have to be in place and placement plans have to fully detail the work that needs to be carried out with the child.	19/11/2017
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who– understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the	19/11/2017

registered person to— provide personalised care that meets each child's needs, as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking account of the child's background. (Regulation 6(2)(b)(iv)) In particular, ensure appropriate key work, independence skills work, life-story work and external specialist work are carried out.	
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*These requirements are subject of a compliance notice.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

For some time now the young people at the home have not been making sufficient progress and for some of these young people the experience of living at the home has not been particularly good. In part, this is a result of the fact that some of the young people who have been placed at the home do not want to be there or do not want to engage with the staff. In addition, the staff team has not always made sufficient effort to engage with the young people and there has been a lack of energy and urgency in its work.

This situation is now slowly improving. The registered manager is leading some change and staff morale is improving.

Since the previous full inspection, three young people have been admitted. Two of these young people only stayed for short placements. One stayed for a couple of weeks and one stayed for three months. Neither of these two young people engaged in the placement at all. Both went missing frequently and presented some challenging behaviour. Both moved on quickly as staff were unable to influence their behaviour. They therefore had little opportunity to make any significant progress and their experience of living in the home was poor. The third young person who was admitted had only been at the home for a few days at the time of the inspection.

Two other young people have been living at the home throughout the inspection period and have made some progress. Both of these young people came from backgrounds where they had had substantial difficulties with their families and with their education placements. They have settled at the home. They have formed good relationships with the staff, and are starting to engage more in life at the home.

One of these young people spends a substantial amount of time away from the home in a shared care arrangement with their family. This is very positive, but it does mean that they have limited time at the home and with the staff and so progress in other areas of their life has not been so good. The other young person has chosen to spend much of

their time in their bedroom and becomes easily engrossed in playing electronic games.

The staff have now been able to better engage these two young people and this is an improvement.

However, both of these young people have a poor record of education attendance. Both young people had full-time education placements, but for various reasons they have not attended very well. One young person felt that the setting did not offer the vocational education they wanted and the other young person's behaviour caused conflict with the school. The registered manager has made some attempts to discuss the issues with both schools and with the local authority virtual school, but has not been able to affect the situation a great deal. Staff have attended one of the schools with one young person to support them with their behaviour, but this has not been effective enough to keep their attendance at an acceptable level. There have also been some issues around the routines in the home and around the expectations of the young people. The staff have accepted the non-attendance without challenging the young people sufficiently. The young people have been allowed to miss school too easily and staff now need to work harder to support all the young people to attend their education or training regularly.

These two young people missed much of their education prior to being admitted to the home. Their attendance did increase for a while, but dropped back again fairly quickly. On balance, although some progress has been made, opportunities have been missed and this progress has not been good enough. A requirement was made at the previous interim inspection to address these issues. This has not been met and so the requirement has been raised again. Currently, all the young people living at the home have a clear plan for their future education and training.

The two young people who have lived at the home through this inspection period have made progress in some other areas of their lives. The staff have developed better relationships with the young people and this is an improving situation. Their health needs have been met and staff have now managed to support them to attend routine medical appointments. One young person has improved their relationship with their family and this is very positive. Another young person has not made progress with their family contact and relationships. The staff do spend time with the young people talking about their difficulties and do refer the young people to external specialist workers when appropriate. However, the content of this work has been limited and the take-up of external appointments has been poor so that only limited progress has been made and opportunities have been missed. This means that the young people have not had sufficient opportunity to discuss their difficulties and to start to resolve these issues. A requirement has been made for staff to complete more personalised work with the young people.

At the previous interim inspection, a requirement was made for staff to engage more with the young people. This has happened and the requirement has been met, but there is still considerable room for more shared activities to take place. This would include leisure activities and regular household activities, such as shared meals.

A requirement has also been made to improve care planning as there are a number of

issues. Placement plans need to be more detailed and specific so that they clearly identify the work that needs to be carried out. Two pathway plans were not in place. There is also insufficient urgency with regard to making plans. Education placements that have not met the young people's needs have been allowed to drift. Although some independence work is being carried out with the young people, more could be done and better written plans and clearer objectives would support this. The young people can have their say in day-to-day matters and do clearly contribute to the planning of their lives. The staff have not been able to encourage young people to attend many house meetings, but young people are consulted on an individual basis. The young people are encouraged to take part in learning some independence skills. One young person is cooking meals for the household on a regular basis. Baking has also become a regular activity. Another has been preparing to move into a semi-independent living situation in the home. This is progress, but there is room for further improvement.

A social worker spoken to by the inspector was complimentary, saying they felt staff had been 'encouraging and consistent' in their work and that they had 'gone above and beyond' in what they had done. Also, a parent spoken to was very positive, saying they felt the staff had the 'patience of a saint' and they too felt that staff had gone 'beyond' what they needed to do'.

There are clearly positive and encouraging developments, but more work is needed by the managers and the staff to promote better outcomes for children and young people.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The young people at this home are currently being supported to stay safe.

Two of the young people who were admitted for shorter stays and later discharged spent a lot of time missing from the home. The staff tried hard to engage with them and to reduce the number of times they were away from the home, but the young people had not wanted to make any commitment to the home and the placements were ended. In the circumstances, this was appropriate to take in order to try and keep these young people safer. The staff did make good efforts to locate these young people when they were missing, and ensured that they were always offered return interviews. Not all the return interviews were carried out because the young people either refused or did not make themselves available when the independent person had arranged to meet with them.

The staff are aware of risks and assess these well. They take appropriate action to minimise these risks and they are able to keep young people safer. One young person with a history of going missing has been supported to significantly reduce this behaviour and this is positive.

There has been no bullying recorded at the home. Also, there have been no concerns about child sexual exploitation.

The inspector was able to speak to two of the young people at the home and had

previously spoken to the third. They all say that they feel safe and secure at the home. All the young people are appreciative of staff's efforts to care for them and they are all confident that they could talk to staff should they have any worries. This is positive.

The staff understand safeguarding procedures, and have had recent training around safeguarding issues.

The staff have been better at putting boundaries and expectations into place. They rarely use sanctions and have not used any physical interventions. The inspector was concerned about the house routines and expectations around these, but there is no suggestion that these affect the young people's safety in any way.

The home is free of any health and safety hazards.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The registered manager does have an appropriate qualification and does have considerable experience. He has told the inspector that he has found himself rather isolated from other managers and practitioners, and has taken steps to address this issue by appointing an experienced person to be the home's independent visitor. This arrangement is working well. The registered manager has commented on how this has helped him and it is clear from the monthly Regulation 44 reports that the independent visitor has a good understanding of what is happening at the home and that they are giving good-quality advice and guidance along with new ideas. This input was clearly helping the manager to better identify the strengths and weaknesses of his staff team and the care practices.

The registered manager accepts that progress since the previous interim inspection has not been as good as he would have hoped. He has only been working part time during most of this period due to his personal circumstances. The two part-time staff who are deputy managers have not been able to make sufficient progress either.

The registered manager does feel that some progress has been made with improving care practices and also feels that most of the young people have made progress. While the inspector agrees with this sentiment, the manager understands that progress has been insufficient.

The registered manager has tried to be more dynamic in his leadership and this is apparent. One member of staff suggested that the staff team had rather 'stagnated', but suggested recently that the team was more 'vibrant' and that this was because of the greater efforts made by managers. The inspector also felt that there had been some improvement in the morale and enthusiasm of the staff team. The staff were more engaged with the young people and this was having a positive effect on the young people. The registered manager was clear that this process still had some way to go and was committed to maintaining and further developing the improvements.

The registered manager does prioritise the needs of the young people and clearly

understands the progress that is being made by them.

Staff say that they feel supported by the registered manager. They have regular supervision and training, and an annual appraisal. The induction of a new member of staff has been satisfactory.

The home has a good-quality statement of purpose which sets out ambitious aims and objectives and clearly defines how they will be met. The inspector felt that practice in the home does not always reflect the stated aims and objectives and the requirements made at this inspection will require staff to reflect on their work and relate this to the home's statement of purpose. The statement says that, 'Wherever possible outdoor activities will be arranged', but there is very little evidence of these being arranged. The statement also states, 'We believe it is not in anyone's best interest to watch TV or play games all day long.' However, one young person has been allowed to spend a great deal of time doing this.

The registered manager is able to form good-quality professional relationships with those outside of the organisation, and is able to challenge them at times. However, the challenges that have been made have not always been effective and in order to meet the requirements made at this inspection it may well be that the registered manager has to be more insistent and urgent in his challenge of others when services or information are not provided to the appropriate standard or in a timely manner.

There were three requirements made at the previous interim inspection. One requirement was for staff to engage with the young people and to develop positive relationships with them. This has happened and so the requirement has been met. The inspector was pleased to see that staff were actively talking about this and putting it into action so that further progress can be made.

A second requirement to ensure that the young people attend education and training has not been met. It was unclear to the inspector whether the young people in the home had the most appropriate education placements. It was, however, clear that they did not attend sufficiently well, with all the young people having poor or no attendance in the period since the previous interim inspection. Staff need to work closely with education providers to ensure that the best placements are obtained, and need to work closer with the young people to encourage them to attend. This will mean improving the young people's routines, and will mean finding additional ways of incentivising them to attend. None of the young people currently living in the home are making the most of their education opportunities and so are not achieving to their potential. This requirement has been raised again.

A third requirement was also not met. Care planning needs to be improved. Pathway plans for two young people still need to be put in place. The placement plans that the staff use to inform their practice need to be more detailed and more specific. Without enough detail and without clearer targets, care planning and the work around this are not sufficiently clear. As a result of this lack of clarity, there is a culture of not supporting young people enough for them to achieve more progress. This requirement has also been raised again.

At this inspection a third requirement was made. This was to carry out more personalised care with the young people. This involves more efforts to talk to the young people about their past and their situation, and doing more work around relevant issues that affect their lives. It also means making greater efforts to encourage them to acquire a greater range of independence skills. This work needs to be informed by better and more detailed care planning.

Overall some progress is being made, but this is not sufficient at present.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC000802

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Arronbeth Ltd

Responsible individual: John Binks

Registered manager: Scott Stainsby

Inspector

Colin Imrie: social care inspector

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