

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC005553
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Dalepeak Limited
Registered person address	Old Mill House 60 School Lane, Bamber Bridge PRESTON PR5 6QE
Responsible individual	Edward Peter Nixon
Registered manager	John Allen
Date of last inspection	19/02/2014

Inspection date	16/10/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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A significant feature of the home is the warm, affectionate relationships that are apparent between staff and children and young people. Staff say, 'I love working here, it's fantastic.' Children and young people share this view and say, 'I like it here, all the staff look after me really well; they keep me safe and care a lot about me.'

The children's home is making a significant difference to children and young people's lives. The stable, motivated and dynamic staff team enrich children and young people's lives by encouraging, promoting and supporting them in addressing their individual needs. This is achieved through aspirational care planning and individualised care practice. As a result children and young people make good progress in developing their confidence, improving relationships, achieving educational success and preparing for independence.

Staff are effective in safeguarding children and young people who told the inspector that they feel safe. Children and young people are able to name at least one adult who they can confide in should they have any worries or concerns. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and have an excellent understanding of their role in promoting children and young people's welfare.

Care practice is underpinned by robust systems and procedures that are designed to give children and young people's safety the highest priority. Good links with partner agencies promote transparency, collaboration and consistency in ensuring children and young people are protected at all times. Safeguarding concerns are managed effectively and in the best interest of children and young people. As a result children and young people are kept safe.

The home is effectively and efficiently managed. The dedicated and hands-on management team advocate and promote high standards of care for all the children and young people. The reliable and stable staff team are highly experienced and work closely with children, young people, their families and partner agencies to provide a supportive and consistent approach to meeting young people's needs. Although systems for reporting and recording are good, a shortfall in the reporting of a significant event has been identified.

Further areas for the home's continued development include ensuring that the home is maintained to a high standard, specifically addressing the paintwork in the upstairs of the building, and circulating the revised Statement of Purpose to reflect the recent change to the management structure.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/02/2014	Interim	good progress
07/08/2013	Full	outstanding
04/12/2012	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/06/2012	Full	outstanding

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated, this relates specifically to the paintwork on the architraves in the upstairs rooms (NMS 10.3)
- ensure that when any revision to the Statement of Purpose is made a copy of the amended document is sent to Ofsted (Volume 5, statutory guidance, paragraph 2.15)
- ensure that a system is in place to notify within 24 hours the persons and appropriate authorities of the occurrence of significant events in accordance with Regulation 30. This system includes what to do where a notifiable event arises at weekends. (NMS 24.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children and young people make excellent progress across all aspects of their social, emotional and academic development. Staff work closely with families, professional therapists and social workers to ensure that children and young people gain a full understanding of their life experiences and personal circumstances to allow them to move forward. These meaningful and trusting relationships mean children and young people become more resilient enabling them to respond more effectively to the challenges they are likely to face in their lives plan more positively for the future.

Children and young people are fully supported to contribute to the development and review of their care plans and are involved in the decisions that affect the day-to-day running of the home. Staff actively seek the views, wishes and feelings of young people through informal one-to one- discussions, individual key work sessions and weekly meetings, as well as via formal consultation and feedback systems. Staff provide excellent support for children and young people and enable them to attend and participate in all meetings that are pertinent to them. One young person said, 'They always listen to me and if they can do it they will, if they can't they tell me why.' As a result, children and young people are involved and empowered because they feel valued and respected as individuals.

Children and young people have a clear understanding of key health issues and are aware of the risks and vulnerabilities associated with taking illegal substances, consuming alcohol and going missing. They are helped to access appropriate support from the looked after children's nurse, specialist child sexual exploitation services and drug and alcohol team to further increase their knowledge and understanding of risks and enable them to make better and more appropriate decisions. The number of risk-taking incidents is reducing because young people are better able to identify risks and make informed choices about keeping themselves safe.

Most children and young people have exceptionally good attendance at school and are making good progress in relation to their starting points. Staff work proactively with education providers, social workers, children and young people to ensure young people receive an educational provision that is best suited to their individual needs. This has resulted in young people returning to education and making good academic progress.

Staff value the importance of contact for children and young people in helping them understand and make sense of their heritage and identity. They are thoughtful in the way in which they facilitate and support contact. Individual contact plans are in place to ensure that the contact that children and young people have with their families and friends is safe, well planned, and is a positive experience for all involved. One young person said, 'Staff are great, they take me to see all my family and I really enjoy it.'

This supportive approach has helped children and young people to maintain regular, good quality contact with their families ensuring that they stay in touch with those significant to them.

Staff support young people to increase their independent living skills as appropriate and in line with their age, ability and level of understanding. Young people who are 'eligible' have pathway plans in place. Young people have contributed to the development of these plans in a meaningful way, ensuring that they are effective working documents. Young people are encouraged to develop their knowledge and life skills in preparation for them to be able to look after themselves and run their own home. Young people confirm this and say they are able to plan and prepare meals, budget, complete household chores and use household appliances. It means that young people are being prepared for semi-independent living and adulthood.

Quality of care

outstanding

Children and young people flourish in a stable, nurturing, supportive and homely environment. Staff provide a consistently high quality care and maintain clear boundaries and routines for children and young people in line with their individual placement plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Staff are proactive in seeking additional support to ensure that children and young people receive a high level of care from all services in line with those plans. One social worker commented, 'They have been excellent in managing missing from home, far better than other agencies.' This individual and proactive care practice contributes to the excellent standards of care received by the children and young people.

Staff actively promote the value of education; levels of attendance for most young people are high. Good links with schools and education professionals promote a collaborative approach to supporting children and young people to engage in the learning environment. Staff source education places quickly so that disruption to children and young people's education is minimised. Children and young people view school positively and realise the importance of a good education. This has resulted in them returning to education and making good academic progress, relative to their respective starting points.

Children and young people live in a healthy environment where their emotional, physical and social well-being is promoted. They engage in a number of social and physical activities with friends, such as: cubs; community youth groups where they take part in dance and drama activities; and after school clubs where they enjoy football and swimming. All children and young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians and have access to a range of health care services to meet their individual needs. The home has a varied and balanced menu which includes regular themed nights. Children and young people are encouraged to shop and help prepare these meals which gives them an understanding of nutrition and cultural traditions. Medication is stored safely and staff maintain the medication records

appropriately. All staff receives suitable training to support health and well-being and this care practice contributes to children and young people maintaining good physical and emotional health.

Family members and partner agencies are extremely complimentary about the staff team and the support they provide. They attribute the reduction in risk-taking behaviours associated with going missing and self-harm to the care that is provided. Family members comment, 'Staff are fantastic, they support (name) extremely well. As such (name) is now beginning to settle down as they are building positive relationships with the staff. This has helped (name) to engage with other professionals, who are able to help them with their issues and other things. This has meant that they are not going missing as much.'

Children and young people live in a large comfortable home which is safe and clean throughout. The living room, games room, kitchen and dining area are decorated and furnished to a good standard. Some attention is required to the paint work on the architraves around the bedroom doors and on the landing upstairs to further improve the standard of the home. Children and young people personalise their own bedrooms and these reflect their individual tastes and preferences. These rooms are maintained to an acceptable standard. A large games room, which has been decorated by the children and young people, allows them space and privacy to see family and friends and do their homework. This ensures children and young people's dignity and respect is maintained.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

Children and young people state they feel safe and are kept safe. They have developed strong and meaningful relationships with the staff which enable them to raise any issues or anxieties with the staff as they arise. This ensures that staff take effective action in supporting children and young people to work through their thoughts, feelings and emotions more appropriately. As a result more positive behaviours are emerging and risk-taking behaviours have reduced. As a consequence children and young people are kept safe.

Staff continuously assess, review and record risks and vulnerabilities in children and young people's risk management plans. Regular team meetings, supervision and daily handovers ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to help children and young people keep safe. Staff work closely with children and young people in key working sessions to help them understand the consequences of risk-taking behaviour. One young person said, 'They try and get me to think before I act.' This has resulted in young people making better choices about keeping themselves safe.

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that the incidents of children and young people going missing have reduced over time. Staff have strong links with the

specialist child sexual exploitation services which ensures that individual risk management plans are implemented effectively to reduce unsafe risk-taking behaviour. One family member commented, 'They go the extra mile; they do not just sit in and wait for them to come back, they go out and look for them, not like the other home they were at.'

Children and young people say the rules in the home are fair. They are fully involved in setting their own behaviour targets which they aspire to achieve. Achievements are rewarded with tokens which are built up and exchanged for treats or additional pocket money. This incentivised approach has been effective in helping most children and young people modify and improve their behaviour to ensure the use of physical intervention is reduced.

When children or young people are able to manage their emotional responses, the use of physical restraint may be necessary. Staff receive training on restraint and only use this to prevent injuries occurring to the child, young person or others. Effective recording of the incident highlights the method of restraint used and the duration of the incident. The record also includes who was involved and the child's or young person's account of the event. The manager evaluates all incidents regularly to analyse and identify any triggers and trends in order to develop and improve care practice. Overall, the number of restraints has reduced over time.

Staff are vigilant and take appropriate steps to verify the identity of visitors to ensure children and young people are kept safe. The homes procedures for recruiting staff are rigorous. Prospective staff are subjected to a challenging interview process and relevant checks are undertaken prior to them commencing their employment. This ensures that they are suitable and safe to work with vulnerable children and young people.

Children, young people and staff understand the evacuation plans which are clear, detailed and regularly practiced by all. A range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine checks are undertaken to protect children and young people and the staff who support them. As a result children and young people live in a physically safe environment.

Leadership and management

outstanding

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed by a suitably qualified manager who has been in post since 12 August 2010. An experienced deputy manager and a senior member of staff support and share the registered manager's aspirations and motivation to improve care practice and drive the service forward. Child-focused practice is well embedded in the home's ethos and has resulted in children and young people achieving positive outcomes in many aspects of their lives. The manager's skills, knowledge and experience are recognised by all partner agencies as being a major contributory factor to the strength of the leadership and

management provided to a committed and stable staff team.

The home is effective in meeting the aims and objectives outlined in its Statement of Purpose. This is currently being revised to incorporate the recent change to the management structure. This will ensure children, young people, their families and agencies have a clear understanding of what they can expect from the home and from whom.

The management team works closely with staff, social workers, health and education colleagues to promote consistently high standards of care. Managers routinely monitor and develop the staff team through purposeful, supervision, appraisal, in-house training and more informal support, including for example through team meetings. New staff are inducted well and are given the opportunity to commence a recognised childcare qualification once they have completed their probationary periods. This ensures that children and young people are cared for safely by appropriately trained staff.

Managers utilise a number of internal and external systems to regularly monitor and review the quality of care provided for children and young people living at the home. An independent person undertakes the monthly Regulation 33 visits and provides written feedback to the Registered Manager. These monitoring systems allow managers to identify strengths and address any shortfalls. No recommendations or requirements were made at the last inspection and the home has continued to demonstrate a capacity for continuous improvement.

There are good systems in place in respect of the management and notification of serious incidents. Detailed records evidence decisive responses to supporting children and young people and sharing information with the relevant parties. However, on one occasion Ofsted was not notified when a young person, who is at potential risk of child sexual exploitation, went missing. This omission did not have a no direct impact on the young person's welfare or care because the right action was taken by staff to manage the absence and secure a safe return to the home.

Children and young people's records are of a high quality. They are regularly reviewed provide a good insight into children and young people's individual and diverse needs. Information is securely stored and is shared appropriately with children and young people, staff and stakeholders ensuring confidentiality is maintained.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
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.

Information 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 framework of inspection for children's homes.