

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008273
Inspector	Sandra King
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Searchlight Care Services Limited
Registered person address	Marcus House Parkhall Road Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST3 5XA
Responsible individual	Denver Alex Underwood
Registered manager	Marianne Roberts
Date of last inspection	17/02/2014

Inspection date	03/12/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a happy home with a family-style atmosphere. Young people make significant progress in this home as a result of well-planned care that meets their individual needs. Young people make good progress in their health, education and independence skills. Their self-esteem and confidence increases. The behaviour of young people is good. The quality of interactions between staff and young people was observed to be positive, relaxed and with lots of humour.

Young people are safe and report that they feel safe . Young people are happy in the home and their views and feedback is proactively and regularly sought by the staff team. This feedback contributes to the managers' systems of monitoring progress within the home. Managers are fully aware of the homes strengths and weaknesses.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private organisation. The home is registered to provide care for two young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties. However, the home only provides care for one young person at any one time, unless the two children are siblings and it is considered appropriate for them to share a bedroom.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/02/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
05/12/2013	Full	good
23/01/2013	Interim	good progress
01/08/2012	Full	good

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 staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, and training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home (NMS 18.1).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people develop their confidence and sense of self-worth whilst living in this home. The home promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. As a result children and young people learn to appreciate the significance of differing values and cultures and to have respect for other people. Life story work is completed detailing young people's time at the home.

Young people enjoy good health and are encouraged to eat a healthy well-balanced diet and enjoy a broad range of physical activities. The home is proactive in ensuring medical information is effectively sought and in a language that can be understood. The home has used a translator to ensure they are fully aware of young people's health needs. This means young people are generally in good health and are learning about leading a healthy lifestyle.

Young people receive and engage well in education. From their starting points, education attendance has improved and young people are making positive progress. An education professional reported the home is, 'creating positive relationships between school and staff with young people as the focus'. Young people enjoy a wide range of activities and report as, 'always being happy' in the home.

Young people have aspirations for the future. The home is proactive in ensuring young people attend school or receive education tutoring at the home. When a young person is not in full-time education, the home is diligent in reviewing the education plan, advocating on behalf of the young person to ensure their needs are met. As a consequence, young people can meet their full potential and enhance their academic and social skills.

Young people are encouraged to become active participants in the home. Independence planning is implemented in an age appropriate manner. Young people enjoy making simple meals; they take responsibility for their own bedrooms and assist in their laundry requirements. Young people have their own bank account and are actively encouraged to save some of their pocket money. One young person is very proud of his bank account and that he has saved money each week. As a result, young people are being prepared for their eventual move to independence.

The home is welcoming to visitors and staff work closely with social workers, family members and young people to maintain appropriate, meaningful contact. Young people enjoy positive and meaningful contact with family members, this is facilitated and supervised, if required by the home. Family members have contact at the young people's home and at their family home. This means, young people feel comfortable and have support during and following contact from a member of staff that they have

formed a relationship with.

Quality of care

outstanding

The quality of care provided to young people is outstanding. Staff and management are passionate, committed and enthusiastic in providing a high quality, child focused service. This home makes very good arrangements to deliver a high standard of care to meet the individual needs of young people. The Registered Manager drives a quality service that plans for, and delivers, what placing authorities have asked for and what young people need. This is delivered in a caring, clear and effective way.

Young people have strong positive relationships with staff. Staff know and understand the young people very well. They provide a caring, nurturing environment, giving consistent messages to them. A professional reports young people and staff's relationship are good with a, 'high degree of warmth and good banter within appropriate professional boundaries.' Young people are encouraged to become active participants within the home. They ensure the service reflects the wishes and views of young people using the service, one young person stated, 'staff are always asking me what I want to do and how the home can improve'. Young people personalise their own bedrooms and are involved in planning the menus, activities and appraisals of staff within the home.

Children and young people's emotional and physical health is good. Staff work closely with health care professionals. For example, health records for a young person needed to be translated. The home ensured that this was undertaken as a matter of importance. As a result, young people benefit from a high degree of support to ensure their optimum health. Staff are trained in the safe handling of medication. Medication is safely managed.

Education is highly valued and staff act as good parents in supporting and advocating for young people's educational achievement. Education providers report as having very positive and supportive working relationships with the staff team. Young people feel motivated to do well and have aims and goals for the future. Young people are encouraged to undertake courses within the home, for example, equality and diversity and food hygiene. As a result, young people's self-esteem and self-confidence is enhanced, coupled with additional knowledge and qualifications to add to their curriculum vitae. This means young people will be able to demonstrate their ability and motivation to learn outside of the school curriculum.

For young people who have been involved in offending behaviours, staff work closely with relevant agencies to ensure appointments are kept and work completed. External professionals comment about good communication from the home. A

professional stated, the home is 'an excellent service to work with, the young person is at the centre of everything. I cannot speak highly enough of the home'.

Young people have their own chosen organised activity schedule. Young people take part in a wide range of activities both in the home and outside of the home, for example, fishing, rock climbing and football. Young people are actively encouraged with their interests, For example, a young person has been provided with fishing magazines to enhance their theoretical knowledge alongside the practical enjoyment of going fishing. As a result, young people develop an attitude of wanting to try new things and develop their interests. Young people are stimulated in their daily lives.

The staff value young people's views and uses a range of consultation methods to help improve the service; young people attend staff meetings; one-to-one key working sessions and young people's consultation papers. Young people complete questionnaires when they leave the home, one young person stated, 'thank you for all your help and everything you've done for me. I loved staying with you, you've all got a wicked sense of humour and made me laugh loads. Your all mint'.' Staff ensure young people's views are reflected within care planning and review processes and recorded within their individual placement plan. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people know how to complain and have access to a complaints procedure which is recorded in the young people's guide.

Young people live in a comfortable, appropriately located home, which is well maintained and furnished. It is a homely and safe environment for young people. Young people and their family photographs are exhibited in photograph frames around the home. This gives them a sense of belonging and a pride in their surroundings, coupled with making young people feel valued.

Young people enjoy regular contact with their family that is risk assessed and supervised by the home. Contact arrangements take into account the needs of the young person and their family. As a result, the service facilitates contact both in the home and outside the home. This ensures young people know and understand their backgrounds and can maintain important links with their family and friends.

Young people's needs relating to their cultural background and personal identity are identified and positively addressed in daily living. Staff ensure young people's cultural identity and heritage is positively promoted. This is facilitated through shopping at cultural shops, learning important words from the young people's first language as well as researching local community youth groups.

Keeping children and young people safe **good**

Arrangements to keep young people safe are strong. Young people articulate clearly that they feel safe saying, 'of course I am safe, I can speak to every member of staff about anything I am concerned about.' There have been no incidents of bullying or allegations since the last inspection. All staff are trained in child protection which ensures the continued development of staff's knowledge and understanding about safeguarding young people.

Incidences of young people going missing are minimal. Young people return quickly and their welfare is monitored. Managers and staff remain vigilant to the possibility that young people can go missing and have strong and effective relationships with the police.

Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and are vigilant and focused on protecting young people from harm. Staff know what to do when they are concerned about the safety of a young person. Staff work closely with external professionals in ensuring young people are safeguarded. Managers act promptly and efficiently to instigate change to safeguard young people. For example, following serious concerns raised by a young person, the home relocated young people and staff to a place of safety. This was as a result of close working relationships with professionals involved in safeguarding young people.

Individual risk assessments are implemented which promote the safety of young people and the safety of others with clear and practical risk management strategies. Risk management promotes ordinary life opportunities whilst reducing unnecessary hazards, in accordance with young people's placement plan. Young people have access to a telephone and computer in accordance with their care plan.

Staff promote a positive culture of managing behaviour. Rewards and incentives are the preferred method of managing behaviours within this home. Staff focus on identifying and dealing with issues quickly to avoid escalation should the need warrant it. Staff manage young people's behaviour by building good relationships and place a strong emphasis on promoting positive behaviour. There have been no incidences of physical intervention and very few formal sanctions. This strengthens attachments and encourages young people to be able to develop alternative strategies in dealing with their own behaviour.

There has been no staff recruitment since the last inspection.

The environment is safe and secure. Staff ensure that health and safety takes a priority. General environmental and risk assessments are in place and regular checks are completed in areas such as gas and electrical supplies to promote the safety of young people and staff. Fire drills are undertaken regularly both during the day and night. Fire drills are a matter of routine following the new admission of a young person. This ensures young people are kept as safe as possible from accidental harm.

Leadership and management

good

Young people are cared for by an enthusiastic, passionate and committed staff team that is caring and qualified. The service is effectively managed by a qualified and competent Registered Manager. The staff team is well established and clearly support each other and work well as a team. The organisation supports the professional development of its staff. Staff consistently comment that they, 'love working in the home and it has a family feel about it.' Staff clearly have the interests of the young people at the heart of their practice.

The home has a Statement of Purpose that reflects the aims and objectives of the home and is supported by the young people's guide. The guide includes details of external advocacy services that young people can access for additional support. This means, young people, their families and the placing authority are clear about the support that the home provides.

Young people's files are securely stored. This ensures the confidentiality of young people is respected. There were no requirements or recommendations from the previous inspection.

The home has a good equality and diversity programme for young people that values and embraces diversity. For example, a wall in the home is dedicated to equality and diversity of all of its staff members and the work undertaken by the young person.

Staff and managers ensure records are up-to-date, stored securely and fully contribute to an understanding of a young person's life at the home. Staff provide comprehensive monthly reports to placing social workers, attend and contribute to reviews. Managers ensure all significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities.

All staff hold an appropriate level 3 qualification. Mandatory training is routinely held and supplemented by more specialist training, for example, child sexual exploitation training. Regular supervision and annual appraisals are undertaken with a well-resourced staff team. This provision of supervision and training ensures that staff are fully equipped and supported to provide good quality care to young people. A recommendation has been made to ensure training is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people. This shortfall has not had an impact on the care young people receive or their outcomes.

The Registered Manager has established thorough internal quality assurance monitoring systems. This coupled with regular feedback and consultation with young people and stakeholders, ensures the home operates to a high standard. The manager has a comprehensive development plan, which highlights areas for further development and improvement.

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.