

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	17/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC008273
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 Underwood
Registered manager	Marianne Roberts
Inspector	Pete Hylton

Inspection date	17/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
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	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC008273

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are effectively safeguarded. This is because staff are extremely competent in identifying and managing presenting risk taking behaviours.
- Young people receive personalised care that reflects their needs and circumstances. This means they make positive and sustainable progress in all aspects of their lives.
- Managers and staff work in partnership with other key professionals. As a result, young people receive integrated and comprehensive care that support their development.
- Young people grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. They regularly participate in activities that develop their hobbies, interests and interpersonal skills. This supports their emotional resilience.
- Staff are well supported in their role. They benefit from bespoke training packages that reflect young people's individual needs.
- Effective communication between staff and education services mean that young people make good progress in this area of their development.
- Care planning processes are reflective of young people's needs. However, keywork session plans lack structure and direction.

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

Recommendations

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

- Each child is provided with support (appropriate to their age and understanding) to communicate their views, wishes and feelings and participate as fully as possible in all aspects of their care planning. This specifically relates to ensuring that there is a plan for key work sessions that is linked to the aims of the placement plan. ((The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 22, paragraph 4.6)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is owned and 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
26/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
17/02/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress
05/12/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people benefit from highly individualised care that is regularly reviewed and where necessary, updated. All required information is recorded on young people's files and staff ensure that records are regularly completed. This ensures that young people, parents and social workers are provided with accurate reports about the good progress that is being made. A social worker commented that they are 'very happy with the care being provided' and that there is 'good communication from the home.' Young people are also involved in reviewing their care. Regular consultation ensures that a range of relevant matters are discussed, recorded and acted upon. Since the last inspection, the manager has made some improvements to recording. However, the key work sessions are not always planned in advance and it is not always clear what these discussions plan to address or how they link to the young person's goals or ambitions. The home is warmly decorated and appropriately furnished. Young people are able, and fully encouraged, to personalise their bedrooms. This means that young people are able to express their individuality and develop a real sense of pride in their surroundings. This is further enhanced through the celebration of young people's various achievements which are proudly displayed around the home. This increases young people's sense of self-worth and embeds their awareness of their progress since being at the home. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. They are built on mutual respect and understanding. As a result, young people enjoy living in the home and make good progress in a nurturing environment. Where concerns arise over the longer-term plans for young people, the management of the home ensure that these are appropriately raised. Where necessary, the staff team effectively advocate for young people. This further enhances young people's sense of security and involvement in their care planning. The health needs of young people are well met. This is because all required health appointments are up to date and where concerns arise, they are promptly addressed with the relevant professionals. Although there is currently no prescribed medication used in the home, there are effective procedures should this change. Effective communication is in place with educational providers. The progress of young people is carefully monitored and reviewed. A teacher commented that the staff 'communicate any issues or concerns. The staff are really good at supporting	

the young person at school and also stay involved at all times.’ As a result, young people make good progress in education. Young people are fully encouraged and supported to explore their career choices and aspirations. This ensures that young people are developing an awareness of the world of work and what is required. In turn, this leads to an increased vocational awareness and supports young people in their plans for adulthood. Similarly, independence is also promoted. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for a range of household tasks. This develops a sense of autonomy in the home, for example, young people are learning how to cook and keep the home environment tidy. Where additional support is needed, the staff team use creative strategies for helping young people to learn different routines and expectations. As a result, young people develop their life-skills and also have a sense of consistency and familiarity in their daily routines.

Young people are supported in maintaining links with their families. The staff team make sure that travel arrangements are in place to support such visits. This further supports the emotional resilience of young people because they are able to maintain relationships with important people in their lives. Similarly, young people are supported in accessing a range of activities outside of the home. For example, trips to the local cinema, recreation facilities and cadets. As a result, young people are integrating with the local and wider community and developing key skills. This helps to ensure that young people form a sense of belonging to the area and make a positive contribution to the local community.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Young people are exceptionally safe in, and outside of, the home. Highly effective risk assessment ensures that the needs of young people are carefully addressed and implemented by staff. Staff assess risk for young people and ensure that young people are cared for in line with presenting need. This ensures that young people are not prevented from taking age-appropriate risk. Proactive practice also ensures that where young people, or their families, have additional language needs, interpreting services are used to ensure communication is effective. Staff recruitment is safely conducted and the process is appropriately robust. Since the last inspection, the same staff team are in place. This provides consistency and also reduces the amount of adults that young people are exposed to in the home. Visitors are effectively checked and where needed, chaperoned. Young people do not go missing from the home. Clear plans are in place should this ever change. Regular reviews of these plans, and all other risk assessments, ensures that the care provided is up to date and reflects current needs. Staff are	

aware of risk factors and are confident in their roles and responsibilities. This is underpinned through regular discussion and training in the home. Staff are confident in their approaches to managing risk-taking behaviour and excellent relationships with young people ensure that they feel safe. Young people are able to discuss their concerns, feelings and worries. This openness engenders a culture where young people feel safe, valued and respected. They have a strong attachment to the staff and to the home.

Specific vulnerabilities of young people are carefully managed through highly detailed and appropriate risk management plans. This ensures that young people, staff and the wider community are not put at unnecessary risk. This also ensures that young people are able to take age-appropriate risks such as accessing the local community with increasing independence.

The home environment is robustly monitored to ensure that all required checks are in place and up to date. For example, regular fire drills ensure young people know how to safely evacuate. The management of the home take care to ensure that young people are not placed at unnecessary risk from fire. Where defects in the environment arise, they are swiftly resolved.

Restraint is not used in the home and incidents of challenging behaviour are exceptionally rare. All staff are trained in the safe use of restraint and recording systems, should they be needed, are appropriate. Sanctions are also rarely used and are appropriately implemented. This helps young people to understand that there are consequences to negative behaviours.

There have been no complaints from young people since the last inspection. Young people are happy and safe in the home. A young person commented, in relation to the staff, that 'they respect me.' A clear and appropriately presented complaints policy is freely available in the home should this change. Staff are attuned to this policy and know how to manage any concerns. Where concerns have arisen about safeguarding incidents, these have been robustly addressed. Appropriate referrals are made to the relevant bodies. This ensures that the safety of young people is promoted at all times. The staff team work well with partner agencies.

The staff team are aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding young people. All staff know how to manage concerns about young people's safety and appropriate procedures are in place should concerns arise about adults working in the home. This is supported by effective supervision of all staff where safeguarding practice is regularly discussed and reviewed. Excellent partnership working with schools and placing authorities ensures that any concerns are swiftly identified and appropriately shared. As a result, young people benefit from holistic care.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
Young people live in a home that is well managed. The registered manager holds the required qualifications and is appropriately experienced. They are supported by a similarly experienced deputy manager. Consistency of staffing is a real strength in the home. The small and close-knit staff team is unchanged from the last inspection. This affords young people a stable, consistent staff team who know the young people well. In turn, this leads to a warm atmosphere where relationships are highly positive. Temporary and agency staff are not used in the home. This further enhances the feeling of attachment and security felt by young people. Staff are appropriately trained and supervised in their duties. Training is regularly reviewed and all staff are up to date with their mandatory training. Since the last inspection, staff have also completed further training in identifying and responding to sexual exploitation. This ensures that all staff are aware of risks and identifying factors. This further protects young people. Further training has also been delivered in supporting young people with additional learning needs. All staff receive regular supervision that focuses on their training and support needs, safeguarding awareness and progress of young people. Staff are able to discuss their practice and identify areas to further develop. The management of the home is well regarded by partner agencies. Comments from social workers and teachers include: 'they are completely tenacious when it comes to getting things done', 'I am really pleased with my relationship with the home' and 'good communication from the home.' The registered manager also ensures that feedback is requested from partner agencies to further improve the service. This information is used to identify the home's strengths and weaknesses. This is evidenced in a clear development plan and an honest appraisal of what they need to do in order to drive further improvement. The registered manager has identified areas to improve including more effective communication with partner agencies and clear plans are in place to address these self-evaluated issues. There is evidence that this is being positively addressed. For example, where there are concerns with delays in the actions of partner services, the manager ensures that there is no drift or delay in providing services for young people. This proactive approach ensures that young people receive the help, guidance and support that they need. There has been measurable progress since the last inspection. The two recommendations made at the time have been fully met and resolved. These related to ensuring young people's views are recorded and that there is a clear complaints policy. The registered manager has implemented changes to make sure staff always seek, and record, young people's views. Furthermore, a detailed	

complaints policy is now in place. Further improvements have also been made; for example, clear recording of young people's progress has led to a reduction in risk-management strategies. This means that young people are able to see the progress they make and are now accessing a wider range of community based activities.

Regular visits, as required by regulation, ensure that young people are spoken to about their experiences and that the home is independently monitored. Where shortfalls are identified, they are quickly resolved. This leads to a home that is continually improving. This is similarly reflected in the manager's own quality assurance which is effective. Staff are encouraged to voice their opinions about any areas to improve for young people. As a result, the staff team feel a sense of ownership in the home and like young people, know that their opinions are considered and influence the running of the home.

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 looked after children 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 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 who 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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