

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	12 July 2016
Unique reference number	SC008274
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Searchlight Care Services Limited
Registered provider address	Marcus House, Parkhall Road, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5XA

Responsible individual	Denver Underwood
Registered manager	Philip Mann
Inspector	Matt Hedges

Inspection date	12 July 2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC008274

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Staff have exceptionally strong relationships with the young person.
- The young person is making excellent progress and flourishing in her life.
- The young person is safe. Staff manage risks extremely effectively.
- Planning for when the young person moves out of the home is forward thinking.
- Managers and staff have high expectations and are ambitious for the young person.
- Managers have an extensive knowledge of the home and an in-depth understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Staff have highly effective relationships with other agencies and professionals.

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):

- Ensure that the recruitment of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks to them. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Only one young person has been accommodated for a number of years. The home is operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
1 December 2015	Full	Outstanding
27 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16 December 2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The young person is happy. She is thriving because of the strong, supportive relationships that she has with staff. She said, 'Staff are wonderful.' Professionals echo this view. For example, a social worker summarising, said: 'The staff are excellent. The young person considers them her family... she feels at home.' The young person is making exceptional, sustained progress in all aspects of her life. She is excelling at school, where her attendance is over 97%. The headteacher noted, 'She is motivated and positive in all that she attempts.' This is due to the highly individualised help that she has from staff. A teacher reported, 'The support from staff has made a difference. She now looks forward and plans for her future.' She has also started to attend college one day a week, where a tutor describes her as 'Excellent... a great member of the group.' In addition to improving academic attainment, this has had a significant, positive impact on her self-esteem. Staff ensure that the young person has access to a range of positive activities. The young person talks happily about this. Youth clubs and dance groups are particular favourites, and she is looking forward to undertaking voluntary roles in the future. As a result, her social skills and confidence have improved dramatically and she enjoys her day-to-day experiences. Managers and staff have close, effective relationships with a wide range of other agencies. The head of sixth form, social worker and independent reviewing officer confirm this. These effective relationships ensure that agencies share information quickly, that the young person receives a consistent approach to her care and that all of her needs are well met. A teacher explained, 'Our relationship means that we can address any causes of concern very quickly.' Staff also ensure that agencies are working closely together to plan for the young person's move from the home. Consequently, the planning is highly comprehensive. Work with the young person started over a year ago to help her prepare as thoroughly as possible and to ensure that she develops the skills and confidence that she requires. Staff have used research to inform their practice in this area. This has resulted in some exceptional, innovative work with the young person. Sensitive subjects including sexual health and relationships are delicately but successfully explored. Consequently, she is being very well prepared for adult life. Staff diligently make sure that the young person's views and wishes are at the	

heart of all that they do, advocating passionately for her when this is required and challenging other professionals productively. This has contributed to a more measured transition plan that allows the young person a greater sense of stability. In addition, staff ensure that the young person stays in touch with her family in a way with which she is comfortable. This ensures that she sees the people important to her in a safe and supported way.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The young person is safe and feels safe. She does not go missing. She does not self-harm, misuse drugs or alcohol, or engage in other risky behaviour. This is due to the care and nurture that she receives from staff, and the open and honest relationships between them. Staff understand, assess and manage risk extremely effectively, both inside and outside the home. They are knowledgeable about potential risks, including the risk of child sexual exploitation, and work proactively to help the young person to prepare how best to avoid these dangers. Staff are creative in their approach, using research, stories and scenarios to help her to understand the 'real-world' dangers as well as the theory. As a result, the young person receives the information that she needs to make well-informed, safe choices. A social worker confirmed, 'The staff balance her need for independence with the associated risks really well.' The young person is significantly safer because of this. Generally, the young person's behaviour is very good. This has significantly improved over her time living in the home and is testament to the effectiveness of the response from staff, who address issues highly successfully. Incidents of negative behaviour are rare. Staff praise positive behaviour. Sanctions are rarely used, and are monitored to ensure their appropriateness and effectiveness. There has been no need to use any physical restraint for several years. Due to the very effective behaviour management approach, the young person takes increasing responsibility for managing her own behaviour and understanding the impact that it has on others. This has had an exceptionally positive impact on her life. Staff recruitment processes are generally robust. The staff team is small, stable, highly consistent and well vetted. On one occasion, a worker (employed in one of the provider's other homes) undertook two shifts at the home as part of their induction. Managers could not provide evidence to the inspector that they had completed a small minority of the required pre-employment checks. Specifically, they failed to explore why one of the start dates provided by the applicant differed slightly from that given by their previous employer. In addition, the recruitment file contains no evidence that managers verified the reasons for the applicant leaving two previous roles. Other checks limited the impact of this. This shortfall did not	

affect the young person, particularly as staff supervised the worker at all times.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
A highly effective management team leads the home. The registered manager is suitably qualified and has been in post since 2008. An efficient, able and committed deputy manager assists him. The management team is committed and dedicated to make sure that the young person receives a high-quality service. They have high expectations of staff. This aspirational outlook reflected in the care practice by the whole staff team, all of whom are equally committed to ensuring that the young person succeeds in all that she does. Managers understand exceptionally well the home's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that they fully meet the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose. High-quality monitoring and review systems help to underpin their knowledge. Managers are innovative. For example they have found ways to gather the views of the young person without needing to set up formal young person meetings. They welcome new ideas and encourage staff to contribute to all aspects of service development. They drive improvement with an established record of providing an outstanding service. These improve the young person's experiences and the quality of care that they receive. All aspects of monitoring are focused on tracking the progress that the young person is making. This results in continued progress and better life chances because she lives at the home. Staff are exceptionally well supported and talk positively about the management team. Supervision sessions are regular and of a high quality. Training is used well and focuses on the requirements of the young person. All staff are suitably qualified and hold the required level 3 diploma or equivalent in residential childcare. These processes ensure that staff have the skills required to meet the young person's needs.	

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 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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