

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	07/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC008484
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Mrs Emma Ward
Inspector	Jo Hornby

Inspection date	07/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds 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

SC008484

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Children and young people live in friendly nurturing environment where they receive excellent care and support. They are highly valued by staff who have created a warm family atmosphere.
- Relationships are a major strength. Children and young people speak very highly of the staff. They report that staff care and support them to develop and progress in all aspects of their development.
- Good support is offered to enable young people to attend and positively engage in their education.
- Staff introduce a variety of leisure opportunities and experiences to children and young people. Thorough risk assessments and behaviour management strategies support young people to safely participate in community activities which develop their social skills.
- Children and young people's safety is given highest priority. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's risks and vulnerabilities and make sure that the right action is taken to keep them safe.
- The manager is highly motivated and committed to promoting optimum life chances for children and young people. She is a solid leader and holds high aspirations for her staff team. She is focused on driving improvement to ensure that young people receive highly individual care and support.
- The manager has strong working links with a range of care, education, health and safeguarding agencies. This collaborative approach is extremely effective in providing children and young people with the right level of care and support to meet their specific needs.
- The manager has excellent oversight of the home. She competently monitors and reviews the development and progress of children and young people and is extremely proud of the achievements they continue to make.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home; the owner is also the Registered Manager. The home provides care for up to six young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/02/2015	CH - Interim	sustained effectiveness
27/08/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
11/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
06/11/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Children and young people live in a warm and nurturing family environment. The home is personalised throughout with photographs of those who live there. They help staff choose the décor for the home and their bedrooms are highly personalised. Staff involve families in the admission process wherever possible so that their child has family photographs and familiar belongings. This process enables children and young people to settle into their new home, gain a sense of belonging and to make positive moves from former placements, with the reassurance from people they know well. An independent reviewing officer said, 'Staff nurture and care for children and work closely with parents. I can't speak highly enough of everything they do and how they care and provide for their different needs. Children are given the opportunity to thrive and they do just that. This is how a home should be.' Children and young people share exceedingly strong relationships with staff. Staff work hard to maintain these attachments and demonstrate a genuine interest in their lives. They routinely share positive experiences and actively participate in events such as going on activities and attending parents evenings for example. The views of children and young people are integral to all aspects of the home and staff provide them with lots of opportunities to have their say. For example, mealtimes are social occasions when everyone can talk about what they have done, what they want to do and what they think. One young person said, 'I love my home and my staff. I can talk to them about loads of stuff anytime and we have a say in everything.' Staff value education and have high aspirations for their children and young people. They have developed effective links with education staff and continue to support individual learning needs in the home. School attendance is at 100%. A member of education staff commented, 'X is absolutely supported. We send the children home with homework. Staff help them to do this and make sure it is returned. They consult us and we work together. X is punctual and has excellent attendance. He has all his equipment and is no different from any of the other pupils. I am more than happy with the staff.' Staff fully understand the children and young people in their care. They know how their past experiences contribute to their complex behaviours and adopt appropriate responses to manage these effectively. Staff consult with children and young people, families, placing authorities to gather detailed information. They use this information to devise individual care plans which are regularly monitored and	

reviewed. Care practice is highly individualised and focuses on the specific needs of each child and young person. Strong, collaborative links are maintained with a range of professionals to ensure that each child and young person gets the support they need to reach their full potential.

Staff promote and facilitate carefully assessed contact between children and young people and their families. They understand the importance of contact and how this promotes culture and identity. Individual contact plans ensure contact with families and friends is safe and a positive experience for all involved. This proactive approach affords children and young people consistency of care.

Children and young people are provided with a wide range of leisure opportunities, such as rugby and Scouts. They like to visit the woods with staff where they enjoy learning about nature and survival skills. Staff are highly motivated and constantly looking for new and different experiences and opportunities such as camping holidays. A staff member said, 'The children have made excellent progress in all aspects of their development. X is going to Paris with Scouts and Y and Z are going on a weekend away to Paris with Scouts and Cubs. This is a massive achievement and great experiences for them.'

Staff promote healthy lifestyles. They support children and young people to contribute to menu planning and encourage healthy diets. Children and young people benefit from detailed health assessments and are well supported in accessing routine and specialist healthcare services. Links with other agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), are effectively used to provide a multi-agency approach in promoting young people's emotional health and well-being.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Staff give children and young people's safety top priority. Individual risks are clearly identified, understood and well managed. Interventions are thoughtful and underpinned by clear individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans. Staff are alert to the indicators of potential risk, such as child sexual exploitation, and take immediate action to keep children and young people safe. They actively encourage them to engage in activities designed to discourage risk taking behaviour and protect them from negative influences in their lives. Staff take a multi-agency approach to keeping children and young people safe by working with the police, social workers and local safeguarding services. A social worker said, 'Staff engage well with young people and help them to understand	

danger. They are very effective at engaging young people in activities so that they learn all about positive influences.'

Staff are proactive in their efforts to locate young people when they go missing from the home. They actively search for them, driving to their last known location such as the homes of their friends. The home has a clear plan in place to reduce this risk. Staff make every effort to understand the triggers for this behaviour and actively discourage children and young people from going missing through distraction and engagement in positive activities. When necessary staff will raise their concerns with placing authorities, the host authority, police and parents to ensure a robust and effective response is made.

Positive behaviour is encouraged. Children and young people benefit from the delivery of consistent boundaries and expectations which help them to understand the effects of their behaviour on themselves and others. Overall, this is having a positive impact and means there is minimal use of sanctions or physical restraint. When restraint has been used, it has been implemented safely by trained staff and as a last resort.

Children and young people say that staff keep them safe and help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. They know that the actions staff take are because they care and at times they need to be protected. Staff support them to understand and manage their behaviour and feelings in a safe environment. Behaviour management plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are effective and take into account the views and experiences of children and young people. A young person said, 'I'm safe here and I know how to behave, sometimes I need help from staff because I might get upset about something.'

Staff employed at the home are subject to rigorous vetting procedures and do not start work in the home until all appropriate checks are complete. All fire, gas and electrical equipment is routinely serviced to ensure they are in good working order. This ensures the environment is safe and that young people are protected from persons who may present a risk to them.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The manager was registered in July 2015 but has worked at the home for a number of years. She has the necessary skills and experience to provide clear leadership and management to a highly motivated and committed staff team. She is well supported by and works closely with the responsible individual who maintains a	

very active child-care presence in the home. They each have excellent understanding of the individual needs of their children and young people and collectively they promote an exceedingly child-centred ethos of care.

Staff report that they feel valued and supported by the manager. There are good arrangements in place to ensure staff receive regular quality supervision that promotes their professional development and knowledge of children and young people. All staff have their performance appraised at least annually. All aspects of care practice are underpinned by good training opportunities which enable staff to understand the complexities of the children and young people.

The home is consistently managed and effective in meeting the aims and objectives outlined in its Statement of Purpose. Child-focused practice is embedded within the home's ethos and has resulted in children and young people achieving positive outcomes in many aspects of their lives. Feedback from placing authorities and education staff is highly complementary and identifies the child-centred approach as a key strength of the home. A social worker commented, 'I have nothing but good things to say about the managers and staff. They fully understand the individual needs of children and the needs of the group. They are enthusiastic, dedicated and highly child-focussed.'

Care planning is of a high standard and is designed to meet the individual needs of each child and young person. The manager regularly monitors and reviews young people's progress as a means of identifying any emerging patterns or trends. She takes action to address quickly any areas of concern and ensure positive outcomes. All significant events concerning the welfare of children and young people are notified to the appropriate authorities swiftly, to ensure appropriate action is taken.

The Registered Manager effectively assesses the quality of care afforded to children and young people. She learns from feedback, placement success and breakdowns. She is dedicated to improving the home and plans to develop effective ways for children and young people to say what they are feeling, which will assist staff to plan strategies to help manage these. She seeks to engage families in their child's life story work so that children and young people have a full understanding of their history and identity. Staff are required to identify more goals and to evaluate how achieved targets have benefited children and young people.

The manager promotes a multi-discipline approach to meeting young people's needs and maintains positive professional relationships with a number of external services. As well as providing direct support for young people, these links are also used to provide staff with information, training and support. This further enhances their skills in meeting the needs of children and young people. This has proved effective in helping young people make positive progress in terms of their individual goals, including keeping themselves safe from harm.

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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