

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>11/10/2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC008484</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Full</b>            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |

|                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Judith Power</b>           |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Emma Ward</b>              |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Janine Shortman-Thomas</b> |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>11/10/2016</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                    |

**SC008484**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home's provision is good because:**

- Children and young people confirm that they feel safe and are happy in the home as a result of the care and support that they receive from the staff. One young person said, 'I love it here. The staff are great. I feel comfortable here and the staff make me feel safe.'
- Children and young people benefit from extremely positive relationships with all the staff, particularly their key workers, who take responsibility for making sure that all their identified and specific needs are consistently met. The effectiveness of these relationships and this support is evident in the progress that children and young people make in all areas of their lives.
- The staff have an intrinsic understanding of all the children's and young people's individual needs and understand their role in supporting and enabling them to achieve their individual goals and aspirations. The staff provide a safe nurturing environment for children and young people to grow and flourish. This is achieved because the manager ensures that the staff are provided with sufficient support, supervision and training so that they can carry out their functions and duties with children and young people extremely well.
- The manager clearly understands children's and young people's needs and is proud to celebrate their individual achievements. The manager maintains this detailed knowledge and understanding of what works well for children and young people and what needs to be improved. This is because she uses the established internal and external monitoring systems exceptionally well.
- Parents and professionals are extremely complimentary about the care and support that the manager and staff provide to all their children and young people. They attribute the progress that their children and young people make to the love, care and support that they receive from the manager and staff. One parent said, 'I cannot fault the home. (Name) is well looked after and the staff have a lot of patience with him. He has really calmed down now and is more enthusiastic about doing things, getting involved with others and he loves school now. They have done him a world of good.'
- The shortfalls that have been raised relate to the recording, monitoring, evaluating and signing of physical intervention records, completing children's and young people's medication records and ensuring that safe staff recruitment practice is maintained.

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

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Due date   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>(1) In order to meet the protection of children standard, the registered person must ensure that children are protected from harm.</p> <p>(2) In particular, the standard requires the registered person to ensure that:</p> <p>(b) the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect each child effectively from harm.</p> <p>This is with particular reference to ensuring that the responsible person identifies an authorised and independent person to monitor and evaluate any physical interventions that the registered manager has been actively involved in.</p> | 30/11/2016 |

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- The registered person must ensure that any child who has been restrained should be given the opportunity to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as practicable, ideally within 24 hours of the restraint incident, taking the age of the child and the circumstances of the restraint into account. In some cases children may need longer to work through their feelings, so a record that the child has talked about their feelings should be made no longer than five days after the incident of restraint. Children should be encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 50, paragraph 9.60)
- The registered person is responsible for maintaining good and safe employment practice, which safeguards children and minimises potential risks for them. This is with particular reference to ensuring that the registered person systematically

verifies all the references of new staff members, and that the registered person routinely checks and monitors that the staff are safe and suitable to perform their roles using the Disclosure and Barring Service. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

- The registered person must ensure that all children's case records are kept up to date and signed and dated by the author of each entry. This is with particular reference to ensuring that all children's medication records are dual signed where required and that all children's physical intervention records are signed and dated by the responsible person or authorised person. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This is an individual private children's home. The home provides care for up to six children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 02/03/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 07/10/2015      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 02/02/2015      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 27/08/2014      | Full            | Outstanding             |

## Inspection judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Children and young people report that they have sustained, positive, and supportive relationships with the consistent and dedicated staff team. The enthusiastic staff team provides a happy, relaxed, nurturing environment where children and young people report that they feel safe and at ease. Children and young people can identify with a number of adults within the home, and report that they feel listened to by the staff team.</p> <p>Children and young people are offered a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. The staff provide children and young people with the chance to get involved in new activities and new experiences of their choice which they have not experienced before. Children and young people benefit from trips out to the Sea Life Centre, theme parks and the cinema, as well as attending more regular community-based activities, such as horse-riding, swimming and cadets. Some of the children and young people were keen to share with the inspector their plans for their imminent holiday to the seaside, which they reported that they were looking forward to. These opportunities give children and young people the chance to enhance their skills and talents, as well as improving their social skills and confidence in their social and community peer groups.</p> <p>Children and young people make good progress in all areas of their lives, notably within health and education. Children and young people experience good physical health, as their complex health needs are intrinsically understood and well managed by the staff. Staff support and educate children and young people well to develop their own understanding of their individual health needs and requirements so that they can take a managed and safe approach to meeting and maintaining their own health needs well. Children's and young people's health records are complete and up to date, and their medication regimes are implemented by the trained staff team safely and appropriately. That said, controlled medication has not been signed for by the witness on one occasion.</p> <p>Effective partnership working with specialist health teams ensures that children's and young people's emotional health needs are met quickly. The manager is proactive in seeking out referrals to the child and adolescent mental health teams and escalates her concerns when these services are not delivered in a timely way. This ensures that children and young people receive the support and services that they need promptly. This cohesive and managed approach is now assisting some</p> |                 |

children and young people in identifying more appropriate strategies to manage their emotional responses, which has on occasion led to some children and young people engaging in risk-taking behaviours, such as self-harming.

Staff work constructively with schools, sometimes communicating with them daily to promote children's and young people's educational progress. Staff work tirelessly with education colleagues to redress the challenges that children and young people are presented with. Staff support children and young people to get into schools, complete homework and attend regular education meetings. They share their well thought-out and effective strategies with school staff to ensure that children and young people benefit from a coordinated and effective educational experience. A professional confirmed this by saying, 'We have a very transparent working relationship with the home. We work together in the best interests of children. Daily verbal handovers and the written handovers we share make sure that we know what issues there may have been. We all sing from the same song sheet as we have a shared interest in ensuring that children and young people achieve.' Consequently, children's and young people's education attendance has improved and they make good, and in some cases exceptional, progress against their individual targets and goals.

Children and young people are supported well by the staff to maintain positive relationships with their family members and friends. Staff are very aware of the fluid family dynamics that some children and young people share with the adults who are important to them. Staff offer children and young people the support and guidance in developing and maintaining these relationships and offer a good level of emotional support and assistance when these relationships become strained. Consequently, children's and young people's sense of identity is strengthened and they maintain a good level of contact with those who are important to them.

Transition planning for children and young people joining and leaving the home is sufficient. One young person who resided at the home for a number of years left prematurely following a significant incident. The manager took the decision that this young person's placement could not be maintained safely and their placement was ended with immediate effect. Following this, one young person has joined the home. The manager acknowledges the importance of ensuring that children's and young people's needs are well matched and their needs can be met without detriment to the existing group. The manager ensures that the staff have a sound understanding of children's and young people's needs before they arrive, by ensuring that pertinent information is shared with staff prior to the child's or young person's admission. When children and young people join the home, they are welcomed warmly by the staff, which ensures that they form positive and nurturing relationships with staff who understand their needs and vulnerabilities well.



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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Keeping children and young people safe is a central concern to the manager and staff. Staff complete individual work sessions with children and young people to develop their knowledge and understanding about keeping them safe. Regular key working sessions give children and young people the chance to think about their actions and consequences and the impact that this has on themselves as well as others. Consequently, some children and young people have modified their behaviours and for some their risk-taking behaviours have reduced.</p> <p>Staff are fully aware of the children's and young people's individual risks and vulnerabilities and implement care plans and risk assessments consistently. The manager ensures that children's and young people's risk assessments and care plans are routinely updated following any significant incidents, and ensures that all agencies are informed promptly.</p> <p>Staff educate children and young people on making good and safe decisions. Staff enable children and young people to take managed, age-appropriate risks, which have been agreed in consultation with them and their placing social workers. For example, children and young people are encouraged to socialise with their friends out in the local community, while maintaining contact with the home and staff, when this has been deemed safe and suitable to do so. When children and young people do not conform to the household rules and do not return home on time, the staff do their utmost to search the local area to locate them quickly. On the very rare occasions when children and young people have been reported missing from the home, the manager and staff have worked swiftly and effectively with the police to ensure that children and young people are returned home quickly and unharmed.</p> <p>Children and young people report that they feel safe. They say that they are confident that should they raise any issues or concerns with the manager or staff that these would be resolved quickly. This is because staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people as they receive sufficient training in this regard. Detailed recordings confirm that the manager deals with allegations made against the home promptly and appropriately. When children or young people have raised any areas of concerns, the manager has investigated these complaints thoroughly and quickly and ensured that all agencies, including the designated officer, are informed. This means that children and young people receive a coordinated response from the agencies which are available to safeguard them, and that their safety and well-being is promoted.</p> <p>The behaviour of children and young people is managed well. The children and</p> |                 |

young people are clear about the rules and the expectations placed upon them, and confirm that these household rules are fair. Staff use sanctions appropriately in response to children's and young people's poor behaviour, and equally staff offer rewards and encouragement for positive behaviour. This results in an improvement in some children's and young people's behaviour as they have a better understanding of what is expected of them.

Staff role model positive behaviour and interactions and they provide clear direction and support to maintain positive peer relationships. The staff's detailed understanding of the group dynamics, their fair treatment and prompt sound advice ensure that there are no incidents of bullying reported within this home.

Children and young people live in a large, safe, comfortable home. Staff respect children's and young people's privacy, and the size of the home allows them to enjoy their privacy and time alone, while also having the option of enjoying spending time together. A variety of health and safety checks ensure that the safety and welfare of children, young people and staff are promoted effectively.

Physical interventions are used appropriately by the staff. These are used as a last resort to safeguard children and young people when diversionary techniques have been proven to be unsuccessful. All the staff are fully trained to implement this care practice safely. Staff support children and young people sensitively after the incident to ensure that they are given the time, space and support to consider and reflect on their behaviours and subsequent actions to minimise any further incidents. However, children and young people are not systematically supported to comment on their emotional responses, their subsequent actions and the staff's responses within these specific records. Furthermore, while there are systems in place to ensure that all physical interventions are reviewed and evaluated, the manager does not ensure that she indicates the date that the evaluation has taken place, nor does she ensure that she signs these documents. In addition, the present behaviour management policy is not robust and transparent enough. For example, the current policy does not indicate who will undertake the reviews and evaluations of any physical intervention when the manager herself has been involved in them. Consequently, there is no independent oversight offering additional scrutiny, monitoring and evaluation to these physical interventions, to ensure that children's and young people's safety and welfare are promoted.

Recruitment practice is not rigorous enough to ensure that only those adults who are safe and suitable to work alongside vulnerable children and young people do so. This is because the manager has failed to verify both of the written references for the newest member of staff. Furthermore, the manager cannot be assured that her staff team remain safe and suitable to maintain their work with vulnerable children and young people. This is because there are no processes or systems in place to check the safety and suitability of the whole staff team routinely using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Consequently, the manager has not reviewed the whole staff team's suitability to perform their roles safely since they

commenced employment with the provider. As such, some members of the care staff team have not had their DBS reviewed for up to ten years, and one member of the administration team, who has access to the home, has not had their information reviewed since November 2003.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The manager has been registered with Ofsted since July 2015. She is appropriately qualified and has an excellent range of relevant experience to guide and support her in her management of her staff team. The manager is professional, competent and confident in her delivery of care, and challenges effectively when children and young people do not get the support and services that they need. The manager has exceptionally high expectations of the members of her staff team. She is proactive in ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge that they need, so that the staff can deliver a high standard of good quality care and support to all children and young people. This managed and supportive approach has proven effective in ensuring that all children and young people continue to make good, and in some instances exceptional, progress in all areas of their lives.</p> <p>Children and young people are looked after well by a stable staff team which is trained, supported and experienced to deliver a good standard of care, as set out in the home's statement of purpose. There is a suitable number of competent staff to ensure that each child's and young person's needs are suitably met. A proportion of the staff team have acquired the required level 3 childcare qualification, with sufficient arrangements in place for others to achieve this within the required timeframe. The manager and staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals, which they confirm supports them to reflect on and develop their care practice.</p> <p>Children and young people are at the heart of the home and their needs inform all practice. The manager has a detailed knowledge and understanding of each child's and young person's individual needs, strengths and areas for development. The manager clearly articulates the progress that children and young people make and her good management oversight and effective progression planning ensure that children and young people continue to make great strides forward in achieving their individual targets and goals.</p> <p>Parents and professionals are enormously complimentary about the commitment, care and support that the staff provide to their children and young people. Parents and professionals confirm that with the support of the staff, and the positive</p> |                 |

working relationships that they have fostered with themselves, their children and young people continue to thrive. One professional said, 'The staff love, support and provide stability for (name) and he is doing really well as a result of this.' They went on to add, '(Name) is making fantastic progress socially and making good progress academically. The staff have been sensitive to his needs and managed his behaviour issues appropriately. As such there have been no further behaviours that cause concerns since March 2016.'

The manager grasps the opportunities to continue to develop and enhance the services that she provides. She has suitably addressed the one requirement and one recommendation raised at the last inspection and is committed to driving the experiences and progress of children and young people forward. The manager has an excellent awareness of the home's strengths, and where there is still capacity to improve, as she regularly reviews and updates the home's development plan through her robust internal monitoring systems. External monthly monitoring, which includes scrutiny from the independent visitor, offers further rigour and insight to the manager, to ensure that she can continue to improve the services of the home further.

The manager ensures that children's and young people's records and case files are detailed and thorough. These are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they provide a comprehensive picture of children's and young people's needs, progression and future objectives.

## 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 children looked after 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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