

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	13/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC008484
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Emma Ward
Inspector	Janine Shortman-Thomas

Inspection date	13/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. Children and young people benefit from a high level of individual care and support and make good progress in all areas of their lives. Four of the six children and young people continue to benefit from a stable and secure placement in their home. These children and young people continue to enjoy positive, trusting and nurturing relationships with each other and the staff. This, in turn, enhances their experiences and supports their continued progress. Effective placement planning and a high level of care and support provided by the manager and the staff team have supported one young person to meet their overall aims and objectives of their placement. The manager and staff have worked hard with partner agencies and this young person to redress their emotional responses so that they can successfully return to live in a smaller family environment. This work with the young person and effective partnership working with the placing local authority and education colleagues have assisted and supported the young person to achieve their long-term goal of moving successfully back into a foster care placement. Transition arrangements for children and young people joining the home are satisfactory. The manager offers emergency placements in line with the commitments outlined within the home's statement of purpose. The manager is committed to ensuring that children's and young people's needs are met as soon as they arrive at the home. The manager seeks out all the necessary information about children and young people before they join the home, so that she and her staff team can provide a high level of care and support at the point of admission. A young person who is new to the home confirmed that they were welcomed into the home on their arrival and that they are made to feel safe and at ease. This was validated by the placing social worker who said, 'The manager asked the right questions and wanted to meet the young person first, but this was not possible. They have a good handle on her needs and plan well to meet these. It has been brilliant how they have managed to engage with her, and the way she has settled and engaged is really positive.' They went on to add, 'I can't fault them. I wish I could clone them and move them here. They are fantastic.' Children and young people make good educational progress. All but one, have exceptionally high attendance rates. The manager values education for children	

and young people and is passionate about ensuring that children and young people receive the services that they are entitled to and deserve. When barriers are presented to the manager, she is professional and proactive in raising these shortfalls with the relevant agencies. As a result, required meetings take place to make sure that suitable packages of support are identified and implemented. One social worker confirmed this and said, 'The manager has requested emergency meetings with school to address the issues. She came up with good suggestions to address the ongoing educational issues to ensure a suitable interim plan is in place.' This proactive approach by the manager ensures that children and young people are provided with the necessary educational opportunities that they need to develop and support their knowledge and skills for a successful transition into adulthood.

The manager and staff support children and young people to build positive childhood experiences. Children and young people are supported to engage in a range of age-appropriate physical activities. Staff support children and young people to take part in activities such as trampolining and swimming, alongside activities which support them to enhance and develop their own areas of interest and skills, such as learning to play the keyboard. Some children and young people choose to attend additional community-based activities, such as Cubs, and benefit from improved social relationships and confidence. In addition, these activities support children and young people to maintain a good standard of physical well-being and provide them with further opportunities to increase their positive peer relationships in the local community.

Professionals are very complimentary about the relationships that the staff foster with children and young people. They attribute the progress of children and young people to the high level of individual care and support that they receive from the manager and staff team. One independent reviewing officer replied, 'Excellent', to all the questions he was asked about how staff support and promote children's and young people's health and educational needs, and how well the staff keep children and young people safe. He wrote, 'I would like to commend the manager and her staff in what they have done & continue to do to support [Name] to achieve his potential. [Name] has continued to thrive whilst at the home and emotionally and developmentally his outcomes have improved to such an extent that he is now ready to leave residential care and go into foster care.'

Children's and young people's welfare and safety are now enhanced and protected as the manager has taken suitable steps to address the one requirement and three recommendations raised at the last inspection. The responsible individual has now been identified as the authorised and independent person, who monitors and evaluates any physical interventions that the registered manager has been actively involved in. This independent oversight promotes children's and young people's welfare as this care practice is now more thoroughly scrutinised by someone completely independent from the incident, thus ensuring that this is safe and suitable for children and young people. Furthermore, those who are evaluating the incident of restraint are now dating and signing the records and encouraging children and young people to add their views and comments to the record. This

provides the reader with some insight into the impact that this event has had on the child. Children's and young people's welfare is further protected as the manager has now improved and implemented robust systems to verify the suitability of the whole workforce that comes into contact with children and young people in the home. This is because Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) applications have been submitted to confirm that those staff who have remained in employment for over three years remain safe and suitable people to support vulnerable children and young people.

The leadership and management arrangements remain strong and effective. The manager ensures that there are a suitable number of qualified staff to meet children's and young people's individual and changing needs. Staff are dedicated and committed to providing a high standard of care to all children and young people. They speak fondly of all the children and young people and understand their needs and vulnerabilities well, working within the constraints of children's and young people's care plans and risk assessments well. When additional staff are required to support children's and young people's changing needs, the manager supports and enhances her current team with the use of agency staff. These consistent members of agency staff bring with them additional areas of knowledge and expertise, which enhances the care and experiences that children and young people receive from the core staff team.

The consistent and core staff team receives appropriate training opportunities and members have their fitness to perform their roles appraised annually to ensure that they do their jobs well. The manager has sourced and provided specific and bespoke training opportunities in regards to the management of risk-taking behaviours, such as supporting children and young people who engage in self-harming behaviour. This additional training provides staff with a deeper understanding of children's and young people's past experiences and how these may manifest themselves in their feelings and emotional responses so that the staff can respond and support children and young people in a more positive and effective way.

The manager uses the internal and external monitoring well to ensure that children's and young people's experiences and progress continue to be enhanced. Any shortfalls or areas for development that the manager identifies through her improved and updated internal monitoring systems are highlighted and addressed quickly. In this way, the manager ensures that the staff continue to deliver a high standard of good-quality care to meet children's and young people's individual needs, and that any areas of improvement are dealt with sufficiently and promptly.

Significant incidents are managed well by the manager. She ensures that children and young people are supported well during these times and that the correct safeguarding agencies are informed so that thorough child protection investigations can be carried out quickly. The manager is meticulous and persistent in raising any safeguarding concerns with placing local authorities when she is presented with barriers for sharing the information quickly with the allocated social workers. However, clear policies on how staff should refer any safeguarding concerns back

to local authorities for further investigation are not available in regards to some placing local authorities. For example, the referral process for sharing safeguarding concerns about children and young people with their placing local authorities were not available for Oldham and Manchester. This inhibits staff from sharing any concerns quickly in the event that the manager is not readily available to do this.

The manager has high expectations for all children and young people and expects staff to consistently deliver a good standard of care. She and her staff team are clear about children's and young people's aims and objectives and have realistic plans in place to achieve these. This is because children's and young people's changing needs and care plans are regularly reviewed and updated by the manager and staff. This information is routinely shared in regular verbal and written handovers and during staff supervisions to ensure that a consistent and high level of care is delivered to all children and young people by the staff team. Although the manager provides an open-door policy and a member of staff confirmed that the manager is available to support them as often as they need this, records to confirm the frequency with which the manager is providing supervision sessions to staff were not available to view at this inspection.

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 who have emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties and/ or learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/10/2016	Full	Good
02/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
07/10/2015	Full	Outstanding
02/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

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

Recommendations

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

- As part of the policies for protection of children, the registered person should include clear procedures for how a staff member should report to an appropriate authority any concern they have about a child within the home either being at risk of, or already experiencing significant harm.

'Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.15

- A record of supervision should be kept for staff, including the manager. The records should provide evidence that supervision is being delivered in line with regulation 33(4)(b).

'Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.3.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection, we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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