

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC008485
Inspector	Angela Whiteley
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Gary Anthony Holt
Date of last inspection	06/01/2014

Inspection date	21/05/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	adequate

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are cared for by a supportive and culturally diverse staff team who are enthusiastic and committed to helping them achieve their potential. Staff provide excellent role models and set clear consistent boundaries. Young people are positive about the care they receive and the relationships they have with staff members. They say they feel safe at the home; that bullying does not take place and that staff talk with them regularly about keeping safe. Some young people recently admitted require high levels of support and supervision, while others have settled, stable placements.

There are some good examples of personalised care being delivered to young people that embraces their cultural differences and helps them to develop trusting relationships and social skills as they settle into the home. A placing social worker and other professionals who visit the home comment positively about the quality of the care and support provided by staff to young people. They confirm that information sharing, planning and working together is effective in meeting young people's needs.

Young people make good progress in their education given their starting point when they arrive at the home. Some young people achieve excellent attendance at school; others have alternative provision in place with innovative programmes that support

their transition back into formal education settings.

Some areas for improvement are identified within the home's records. These include the home's admission records; the statement of purpose; a review of the suitability of the location of the home and the home's development plan.

Other areas identified to improve practice and outcomes for young people relate to the manager not consistently notifying investigations and outcomes of child protection investigations to Ofsted. However, staff take appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. Also, irregular patterns of staff supervision and the decorating and maintenance of young people's bedrooms. These shortfalls have not impacted negatively on the quality of care and outcomes for young people. The manager acknowledges the weaknesses and will address them promptly to ensure the standards of care remain high and continue to improve.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to six young people with physical disabilities and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
06/01/2014	Interim	inadequate progress
31/05/2013	Full	good
28/02/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/09/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure the home's Statement of Purpose consists of a statement as to the matters listed in Schedule 1. In particular, the type of accommodation, including sleeping accommodation, a description of the location and the work address of the registered provider. Also, ensure a copy of the document is provided to HMCI (Regulation 4 (1) (2) Schedule 1 (8) (c) (9) (15) (a) (b))	02/07/2014
29 (2001)	ensure a record is kept in the children's home in the form of a register of each child accommodated in the home with details specified in Schedule 4. Ensure the record is kept up-to-date and retained	02/07/2014

	for at least fifteen years from the date of the last entry (Regulation 29 (1) (2))	
30 (2001)	notify without delay any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5; with particular reference to notifying Ofsted of the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiry involving a child accommodated at the home (Regulation 30 (1))	02/07/2014
31 (2001)	conduct a review of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises and consult, and take into account the views of, such local bodies or persons as the registered person considers appropriate (Regulation 31 (1A) (a-b) (1B))	02/07/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment, in particular ensure young people's bedrooms are reasonably decorated and promptly maintained (NMS10.3)
- ensure there is a written development plan in place, reviewed annually (NMS 15.2)
- ensure all staff are provided with regular supervision, in particular new staff. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people feel safe at this home and say they are well cared for and respected by staff and each other. This helps them feel valued and increases their self-esteem and confidence. Some young people have been at the home only a short while and require time to settle. They continue to display the same behaviours they were presenting prior to their admission. Staff take appropriate action in response to any incidents and are committed to helping young people achieve stability and permanence.

Young people enjoy relatively good health and take regular exercise. They are registered with all primary health care providers and, where appropriate, secondary health care provision, such as mental health, drug and alcohol and sexual health services. Young people are encouraged to understand the importance of looking after themselves and are supported to make positive life style choices.

Young people enjoy a wide variety of meals and a healthy diet. Individual requirements because of cultural or religious differences are fully catered for. Young people help to shop for food items and help to prepare meals and bake, which helps them develop life skills and become more self-sufficient. Individual independence programmes take account of young people's skills and abilities. They develop personal care skills and basic life skills. This helps to prepare them for the transition to adulthood and independent living.

Where appropriate, young people benefit from contact with family and friends and staff support and facilitate contact. This helps young people to maintain positive relationships with those who are important to them and for some this has enabled them to begin to build positive relationships. Some contacts are restricted and staff support young people to understand the reasons behind this, which helps promote their safety and welfare. Young people from different ethnic backgrounds are encouraged and supported to attend religious services and cultural festivals. This helps them to retain their cultural identity and develop a positive self-image.

Young people are supported to attend education provision and their attendance is closely monitored. For some, school attendance has greatly improved since being admitted to the home. Some are taking Key Stage 4 examinations and are preparing for further education courses. They are predicted to achieve above average grades in five subject areas. Young people celebrate their achievements with staff and receive incentives and rewards. This helps young people to achieve their maximum potential. Teaching staff speak positively about young people's potential to learn and their ability to succeed when in the right learning environment.

Quality of care

good

Young people live in a caring environment and have good relationships with staff. One young person said, 'this is the best place ever, staff treat me respectfully, they come to work to help you.' Another said, 'its better here, than where I was before.' They say they feel safe living here and can talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns. They confirm they know how to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of their care. Some young people have independent advocates to assist them in meetings to ensure they are listened to.

Each young person has a key-worker but can talk with any member of staff at any time. Key workers have formal and informal meetings with young people to discuss the care they receive. They have open and honest dialogue with staff and feel listened to as their views are also sought through regular young people's meetings. These measures help to ensure that the individual needs of young people are fully met.

Staff show persistence when faced with setbacks or failures and continue to support and guide young people to make positive choices in their lives. They help them to develop coping strategies to manage periods of crisis and help to bring about change. When young people place themselves at risk staff are proactive in contacting the placing authority and other professionals to review the placement plan.

A placing social worker commented that, 'the level of communication between staff and myself; has been very, very good. I believe I have spoken to either the manager or individual staff every day, who have updated me on the emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing of the child, which is invaluable.'

Staff promote cultural diversity and encourage young people to value different life experiences. They accept and show a mature understanding of different cultures and religions and are supported to attend cultural events and festivals. This helps young people to develop their confidence and self-esteem and to retain their cultural identity.

Staff are proactive and consistent in supporting young people's educational achievement and attendance. They celebrate and reward all young people's progress and achievement.

Young people are encouraged to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Individual dietary needs are fully catered for and members of staff are trained in safe food hygiene. Staff are in regular contact with the looked after nurse for children and other health care providers. They provide good access to a range of support services. This helps promote and safeguard the welfare of young people.

Young people are able to participate in a wide range of activities that include, going to the cinema, running club, swimming and playing football. The staff help young

people to learn about independent living and to develop skills associated with daily living at a pace suited to their age and ability in preparation for a smooth transition to adult life.

Young people enjoy living in a residential area that is close to a range of amenities. They have access to gaming equipment, a range of books and board games. There is a large enclosed grassed area for playing ballgames where they can also enjoy using the bouncy castle and slide. There is a television in the lounge where young people can relax. The home has a dining area where members of staff and young people socialise and enjoy a meal together. The home provides a comfortable environment for young people. However, young people would benefit from redecoration and painting of their bedrooms along with new furnishings as their rooms show significant wear and tear. This will further improve young people's living environment.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say they feel safe, secure and well cared for in the home and know how to use the home's complaints procedures, which is clearly set out in the young people's guide. There are no issues of bullying. Staff are confident in implementing safeguarding policies and procedures if they have any concerns about young people's welfare or safety. Staff receive regular, appropriate safeguarding training.

Staff recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of young people and take appropriate actions to address them. Most young people are well settled in their placements and choose not to go missing from the home. Despite staff efforts, some young people who are new to the home continue to take risks and go missing, which places them at risk of harm. Staff quickly implement the policies and procedures to assist a young person's safe and quick return home.

There are clear practices and policies in place with the local police that staff understand and are able to demonstrate a good awareness of the protocols. Staff are proactive in communicating with placing authorities to highlight the safeguarding issues and contribute well to strategies that help improve outcomes for young people. Staff are in regular telephone contact with young people until they return home safely.

As young people settle into their placement and care plans and placements are reviewed, records show there is a reduction in young people going missing from the home. A placing social worker said, 'I am satisfied that this placement is appropriate for this young person and currently meeting the immediate needs of keeping her safe from harm at this time, the placement is continually reviewed on an almost daily basis'.

The consistent, individualised approach to risk assessments and behaviour

management ensures that young people learn appropriate boundaries. Protective measures are in place to promote young people's welfare that help to protect them. Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint but prefer to use de-escalation strategies. These are effective measures, as physical intervention records show a reduction in incidents and no sanctions have been required for several months.

Young people enjoy a safe and secure environment. There are good health and safety systems in place. For example, staff are carefully selected and vetted before they start work at the home. Young people are involved in regular fire evacuation practices so they know how to leave the home in the event of an emergency. These effective measures help to protect young people from harm.

Leadership and management

adequate

The home is generally well managed by a suitably qualified, experienced and enthusiastic Registered Manager. He has been in post at this home since September 2013 and was a former Registered Manager from January 2010 at a home owned by the same provider. The stable staff team have a balance of gender, age and ethnicity. They demonstrate a high level of commitment and understand the needs of the young people in placement. A member of the team said, 'this is the nicest house I have ever worked in due to the staff and young people living in a very diverse house.'

The staff routinely undertake mandatory training including, safeguarding, first aid and crisis intervention. Opportunities are available for additional training in response to young people's emerging needs, such as child sexual exploitation training. This ensures staff have opportunity to develop their practices.

Staff confirm they feel well supported by their colleagues and manager. However, supervision arrangements are not consistent throughout the team as some staff are not receiving regular supervision, particularly new staff. This means professional development and practice is not well monitored. This inconsistency is acknowledged by the manager who intends to address this by developing a more effective monitoring system.

The home's aims and objectives are set out in its Statement of Purpose. The document is generally well written but does not contain all the required information. This means the document is not providing a clear picture of the home and the care that is being provided. Additionally, the manager has not yet consulted with appropriate people to form a view about the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the home. This helps to ensure that young people are protected from harm and have access to suitable services.

The home does not have an admission and discharge register to record who has

been admitted to the home and how long they have lived there. They have an admission document in each young person's file, however this does not provide a sufficient record that can be kept for the required time.

Young people's records are well arranged, stored securely and of good standard. This provides young people with a good overall picture of their experiences at the home. They are regularly involved in decisions about their care and influence the running of the home. Staff actively involve parents and other professionals in the care planning process, which ensures a consistent approach to young people's care.

The home's manager has systems in place to ensure that the quality of care is regularly monitored. Any problem areas identified are attended to promptly and appropriate action taken. However, the home does not have an up-to-date development plan in place. Despite this, the home's manager understands the strengths and weaknesses of the home and how he intends to improve the service they provide.

Significant events are usually notified to all relevant agencies in a timely manner, which ensures that appropriate action is taken to protect young people. However, Ofsted has received a late notification from the manager following a serious incident and there has been a lack of consistency in notifying child protection investigation outcomes. The manager is able to demonstrate procedures were followed with regard to other agencies. This had minimal impact on the outcomes for young people as procedures are in place to ensure young people are kept safe. The manager has fully addressed this matter retrospectively.

The manager acknowledges a weakness in completing administrative tasks and demonstrates a willingness to address these areas with some urgency. He intends to do this with improved systems and recording that will better capture data, to improve outcomes for young people. There are no outstanding requirements or recommendations from previous inspections, which demonstrates the manager is committed to an improvement agenda.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.