

SC008488

Registered provider: Halliwell Homes Limited

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a private children's home registered to provide care and accommodation for up to eight children who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. This home offers education on site, at a registered school.

Inspection date: 20 February 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2017

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 last full inspection. At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Since the last inspection, one child has moved onto a new placement. The move was well planned and effective partnership working with the staff from the new home ensured a smooth transition for the child. Work was undertaken to help the child to understand why change was happening; this promoted a positive ending for them. This had been the longest placement for this child.

Two of the three children resident at the time of the last inspection remain living at the home. There have been a number of new admissions and there has been an increase in numbers. Currently there are seven children living at the home. They are all making considerable progress from their initial starting points. One child is preparing for their imminent move to a foster placement and another child is also ready to make the transition to foster care. Children benefit from the child-centred and nurturing environment. A placing social worker said, 'I get the sense it's always about him... they are doing a great job of his care... they have a good understanding of his background.'

Another commented, '[Name] is doing brilliant... there were a few teething issues, they are brilliant at managing him.'

The manager has a good understanding of the needs of the children, and can demonstrate the positive impact that living at the home is having on individual children's progress and experiences. In addition to managing this home, the manager is operational lead for the residential services, which means her time is divided between the two roles. There is a suitably qualified and experienced deputy manager who provides additional support. The manager is planning to step down as the registered manager and the newly appointed manager will apply to be registered with Ofsted. This will ensure consistent management oversight of the day-to-day operation of the home.

Staff said that the team is working cohesively and is well supported by managers. New staff have undertaken a thorough induction, including shadowing other members of staff on duty. At the last inspection, the manager was asked to ensure that a workforce development plan was in place. She has started this piece of work, but has not formalised the plan to include the necessary arrangements for staff supervision, induction, qualifications, appraisal and training. Therefore this recommendation is repeated.

Children are able to build trusting relationships with the adults who are looking after them. Consequently, they are able to develop a sense of permanence and belonging.

Evidence of the progress children make is clearly recorded in their weekly and monthly reports. There is good evidence to demonstrate that staff help children to understand the content of their files in order to help promote their knowledge and understanding of their plans.

All of the children are in full-time education, and have excellent attendance. They enjoy a range of activities that reflect their interests and hobbies. For example, one child is learning to play the guitar. Other examples include swimming, football club, Cubs and skateboarding. This helps to improve their feelings of self-worth, builds confidence and helps them to learn new skills.

Effective behaviour management strategies include praise, rewards and negotiation. Clear boundaries and routines help children to feel safe and secure. Incidents of challenging behaviour reduce over time, which means that there is a reduction in the use of physical interventions and sanctions for all children. Sanctions are restorative in nature, and enable children to reflect on their behaviour and put right any wrongdoing. A member of staff told the inspectors that the children have made real progress in terms of developing positive behaviour, especially in relation to developing 'empathy and tolerance towards others'.

Since the last inspection, the manager has not been involved in any physical interventions. She took on board the previous recommendation and, as a result, an operational lead is now responsible for the scrutiny of any physical interventions that involve the manager. This ensures clear oversight and accountability for her practice.

Allegations or concerns in relation to staff practice are shared with the appropriate agencies, including the local designated officer. There is regular communication in relation to safeguarding concerns, which promotes children's welfare and safety. Inspectors were aware during this inspection of a serious incident involving care staff that is under investigation. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, action taken by the setting in response to the incident was considered as part of the inspection. A breakdown in communication between the managers led to a delay in notifying Ofsted of the incident. However, this has not impacted on the welfare and safety of the children.

There is regular monitoring of the home both internally and externally to ensure that the good standards of care are maintained. The reports demonstrate that the independent person spends time talking to the children, as well as seeking the views of professionals on the quality of care. That said, the manager was advised that the visitor often repeats the previous months' comments, which makes it difficult for the reader to ascertain which comments are the most up to date.

A recommendation is raised to improve the quality of the environment. The standard of decor has deteriorated since the last inspection. Some paintwork is dirty and the carpets are stained. In addition, there is lots of clutter in the office and in the staff sleep-in room. The home would benefit from a deep clean to provide a more homely and welcoming environment for children.

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2017	Full	Good
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
08/06/2016	Full	Requires improvement
04/02/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a workforce plan which can fulfil the workforce-related requirements of regulation 16, schedule 1 (paragraph 19 and 20). The plan should be updated to include any new training and qualifications completed by staff while working at the home, and used to record the ongoing training and continuing professional development needs of staff, including the home's manager. ('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of their children, they will, in most cases, be homely, domestic environments. Children's homes must comply with relevant health and safety

legislations (alarms, food hygiene etc.); however, in doing so, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression.('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

- The design of the home should provide staff that sleep in the home overnight with appropriate accommodation and facilities to do so.('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.26)
- The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event.('Guide to the children's home regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC008488

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Halliwell Homes Limited

Registered provider address: 1 Tape Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST10 1BB

Responsible individual: Karen Mitchell-Mellor

Registered manager: Lorraine Aston-Donley

Inspectors

Michelle Bacon, social care inspector

Anthony Kyem, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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