

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	17/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC013598
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Cherry Trees Limited
Responsible individual	Mark Clement
Registered manager	Peter Davey
Inspector	Chris Peel

Inspection date	17/03/2016
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 judge that it has declined in effectiveness. Children and young people benefit from fabulous facilities at this home. The range of equipment available to them in the house and gardens is of the highest standard. The provider continues to make considerable investment to further enhance amenities including refurbishment of the sensory and arts and craft rooms being carried out at the time of the inspection. Safe handling of children whose mobility is restricted has been improved by the installation of ceiling mounted hoists and a high sided bed, currently on order, will enable the home to offer short breaks to those requiring this protection. The manager prefers windows to be kept locked to ensure there is no opportunity for children to trap fingers in them. However, during the inspection fire doors were found propped open to air bedrooms as windows could not be opened. The manager has fostered very positive links with organisations in the community, one of which has contributed time and materials to decorate several rooms. The whole environment therefore contributes to short breaks being a life-enhancing experience for many children and young people. This is reflected by the compliments and thanks expressed to the home by parents. Professionals, and young people where it has been possible to ascertain their views, have also given positive feedback. Since the last inspection the manager has amended the behaviour management policy to include the need to record the use of time out (referred to as 'reflective time'). He has devised a log for this purpose that ensures that compliance with relevant regulations can be demonstrated. However, other sanctions are not recorded and the timescale set in the last inspection report for the record of any measure of control, restraint or discipline that includes these matters has been missed by several months. The manager does not routinely comment on any of these matters so there is no clear monitoring of the fairness or effectiveness of measures used. Recommendations previously made have been met.	

Bolts have been removed from bedroom doors but two remain in use on passageway doors, one of which leads to the lift and to a bedroom and is kept locked when the room is not physically occupied. This should be risked assessed.

Children and young people are welcomed into the home through an induction process that involves initial visits, longer stays and then overnights, if desired. The manager takes his cue, in the main, from the wishes of parents and their understanding of their children. An assessment is undertaken of the young person's needs but the only documentation made by staff is in the admission papers. This is regularly updated. Thought is given to which young people might be best suited to be together but no impact risk assessment is written up and as they do not necessarily have fixed nights for short breaks the groups they are with fluctuates.

Parents are asked for their agreement to children sharing as several bedrooms are twin bedded. Consideration is given to who should occupy which room, for example, those who can be particularly noisy having an empty one next to them to avoid disturbance. Children who exhibit risky behaviours are placed in single rooms but a risk assessment is not drawn up for sharing. Given the implications of any problems arising from young people being together overnight and statutory guidance stating that they should, in most circumstances, have separate rooms a formal assessment of compatibility should be made.

A great deal is being done to ensure short breaks are enjoyable, including some life enhancing experiences for young people. These include the opportunity to engage in physical activities such as riding on swings and roundabouts by wheelchair users on specialist equipment. Less emphasis is given to promoting their progress. Targets have relatively recently been set for young people and some thought has been given to breaking these down into smaller steps, but a considerable amount remains to be done. Targets are often phrased so that it is not clear what is being expected, for example 'encourage and promote independent feeding', and no record kept of progress other than a date to indicate when they have been achieved.

There is a willingness to develop work in this area but the promotion of progress is not embedded in the culture of the home. Staff do not mention work being done to achieve targets in daily record sheets, quick reference cards of targets are not always up to date and, in the handover meeting observed during the inspection, no reference was made to them.

Staff demonstrate a detailed knowledge of children; key workers gave meticulous accounts of each young person's stay at the handover meeting and staff explained what behaviours might mean and why they responded to them in particular ways during observation. Adults cared for children and young people with sensitivity and warmth. They initiated activities or responded to choices made by young people, who showed obvious pleasure with this. The atmosphere was calm, despite the fun being had by quite a large number of children. One young person told me he liked

coming to the home and enjoyed the food, asking for 'seconds' on the evening of the inspection.

The process of auditing files is to be made more thorough; the manager did not know if a particular record was made under the current arrangement and this contributed to a behaviour management plan being missing from one sampled file.

The manager was not conversant with the legal status of young people, or certain of the difference between being subject to a child protection enquiry or on a child protection plan. This knowledge deficit may inhibit effective advocacy for young people. This weakness is compounded by the fact that staff do not seek to be invited to statutory or child in need reviews (if missed) nor do they chase minutes. The manager stated that he did not think this was the job of the home. Although there is no evidence that particular children are more vulnerable as a result the manager and staff are unaware of specific relevant plans and therefore unable to effectively contribute to them or ensure they are implemented within the home.

Information about this children's home

The children's home is registered to offer short break placements for children and young people with learning and/or physical disabilities. The home is owned and run by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/10/2015	CH - Full	Good
26/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
28/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
26/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress

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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
If the registered person considers, or staff consider, a placing authority's performance or response to be inadequate, challenge the placing authority to seek to ensure that each child's needs are met, specifically to receive relevant plans and request invitations to reviews. (Regulation 5(c))	29/04/2016
To meet the leadership and management standard the registered manager is required to: understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home, specifically that targets are set and recorded to identify increasing competence. (Regulation 13(2)(f))	29/04/2016
The registered manager must undertake such continuing professional development as is necessary to ensure that the registered manager has the skills needed for managing the home, specifically to have an understanding of the looked after status of children and those on child protection plans to ensure effective cooperation with local authorities and other agencies and to maximise the homes contribution to safeguarding young people. (Regulation 29(4))	17/06/2016
Ensure a written record is made of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the matters listed within Regulation. (Regulation 35((3)(a)(b)(c))	29/04/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account

of the following recommendation(s):

- any decisions to limit a child's access to any area of the home, must only be made where this is intended to safeguard the child's welfare. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 3.10 page 15)
- Where the home arranges for children to share a bedroom and so does not conform to guidance that children should have separate bedrooms this should be subject to a written risk assessment. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 3.19 page 16)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and principles of treating each child with understanding, dignity and kindness are respected. (Guide to Children's Homes Regulations 9.36 page 46)

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 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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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