

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	24/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC015264
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	The Chartwell Group
Registered person address	The Chartwell Group The Jays Goodens Lane Newton Wisbech PE3 5HQ

Responsible individual	Christopher Wright
Registered manager	Vacant
Inspector	Michael Mulvaney

Inspection date	24/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires Improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires Improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement

SC015264

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is requires improvement because:

- This inspection has identified a number of shortfalls in the management of the home that impact on the quality of care provided. In particular, the number of staff and their training, as well as the monitoring of care planning.
- The number of experienced staff is low. This means that, despite some experienced staff on each shift, new and inexperienced staff are in the majority. As a result, workers that are more experienced come in when they are not on duty, to undertake tasks such as administering medication.
- Because of the depleted staff group, there is a lack of consistency in updating and reviewing care plans. This means that the staff are not working with the most up to date information to meet the needs of the young people.
- Some young people's medication routines have changed. Their care plans do not reflect these changes. Although verbal communication in handover meetings minimises the associated risks, the plans should reflect the current and important information.

The children's home strengths

- Young people make real progress in their development, particularly with their education. Because of this, they are able to develop skills and achieve recognised qualifications.
- Most of the placements continue as planned and are long term. This provides staff with the time to get to know and understand young people. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is good, despite the minimal staffing arrangements.
- The registered individual and manager are aware of the shortfalls and are working to address them. For example, they have employed an agency to help recruit full time experienced staff.

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
13: The leadership and management standard: In order to meet the leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children home that requires that the registered person to: (2) (a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers outcomes, set out in the home statement of purpose (c) ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child (d) ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child (f) 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 and the quality of the care provided recommendation	29/01/2016
14: The care planning standard: In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must: (2) (b) (ii) manage and review the placement of children in the home	29/01/2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure there are suitable arrangements to manage and administer medication.
(The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 35 paragraph 7.15)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and or learning difficulties. This home specialises in offering long term placements to boys. There is an independent special school on site.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
25/09/2014	Full	Good
10/01/2014	Interim	Inadequate Progress
29/04/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires Improvement
Young people make satisfactory progress because they live in this home. A small and dedicated group of staff work hard to support these young people and to provide a positive and enjoyable time within the home. Some of the care plans do not reflect the current needs of the young people. This means that the staff are not able to record accurately the progress that young people have made. The interim manager is prioritising the updating of these plans. There are appropriate relationships between the staff and the young people. An independent reviewing officer commented: 'They have built trusted relationships with the staff who help him to feel confident in the community. Staff support him in making the transition to college and this has proven really positive.' This support has seen improvements in the young people's engagement in education. Staff support young people with homework or with projects from college. Support is available for the staff from a psychologist and other multi-agency practitioners, to help to direct the work with the young people. This professional advice assists to build relationships that help the young people to recover from early life trauma. It also supports the staff to provide consistency and guidance when managing behaviour. There are regular meetings with the young people to help staff to hear their views on a range of subjects, such as the décor of the house, the activities available and relationships in the home between the young people. A social worker commented: 'My young person thriving; they have responded positively to structure in the home.' Staff help the young people to make and keep appointments with doctors and other medical practitioners. They also support young people to attend Child and Adolescent Mental Health appointments as and when required. This means that support and treatment is available to young people who require this specialist resource. An area of strength for the staff is their ability to engage the young people in community resources, such as the army or navy cadets. This is positive as it helps them to make friends in the local area outside of the home. It also provides interesting and exciting opportunities, which build on their self-esteem. Staff prioritise contact for young people. They transport them to family events and take care to create an environment where contact can be as positive as possible.	

This includes arranging activities in the local area for families, which helps to make the contact enjoyable and a more natural event. It helps promote the young people's knowledge of their background and their home community.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires Improvement
The shortfalls highlighted in this inspection mean that home is not delivering good help and support for the young people overall. The lack of a permanent manager and the diminished staff group has meant that risk assessments are not up to date. As a result, the staff do not have the most up to date information with which to promote the young people's welfare needs. The interim manager and staff resolutely work together to try to minimise the impact of this shortfall through consistent verbal information sharing in handovers. The risk assessments and subsequent care plans do not reflect the work staff complete to keep the young people well-cared for in line with their plan. Young people say that they feel safe in this home. The young people are happy in this home. One said: 'It's a laugh here, I like the staff, they are good and take us out too.' The provider has robust safe recruitment processes and staff check all visitors prior to accessing the home. This helps to promote their safe care. Young people do not go missing from this home. Staff detailed the procedure that they would use to alert the police and other agencies should a young person go missing. There is a clear understanding regarding the risks that these young people may experience, such as the risk of child sexual exploitation. Some staff have had updated training to consider this and information has also been shared at staff meetings. Staff have input from a psychologist and other multi-agency workers to help them to understand the young people's behaviour. This also helps the staff to look at how they manage some of the behaviour that young people exhibit. Staff are looking at developing restorative measures to help the young people see the consequences of their actions. Staff have considered asking for small payments to replace items damaged. The staff have looked to remove an activity as a sanction only if it promotes positive conduct. Staff have used restraint on one occasion since the previous inspection.	

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement
This inspection has highlighted shortfalls in a number of areas. These are particularly with regard to the recording and reviewing of risk assessments, the management oversight of young people's records and the training for staff, as well as the recruitment and retention of staff in the home. The registered manager post is currently vacant. The interim manager has a social work qualification and has worked in this organisation for 20 years as a manager and director. The interim manager is a registered manager from another home linked to this provider. This is in place while the provider is engaged in recruiting a new manager. The commitment from this manager, who continues to manage the other home, has enabled the staff to maintain a standard of care following the unplanned departure of the previous manager and deputy. Currently, the interim manager is working long hours to support this staff group. These changes have left the home with a very small core group of workers, some of whom have not had training in specific areas. For example, some staff have not completed training in managing medication. As a result, senior staff come in when they are not on shift to give medication. This means that those senior staff are not able to fully focus on other management tasks that would improve the quality in the home. The interim manager is considering introducing practices that are successful in their other home. This would concentrate on improving the management oversight of care planning, risk assessing and in particular, recording of progress. There is support from the interim manager through supervision. These regular meetings promote good practice and challenge any discrepancies identified. The interim manager and other senior staff with restraint training are required to be available on short notice to assist with escalating situations. This is because staff on shift do not always have the required skills to meet the needs of the young people. The registered individual and the interim manager are fully aware of the areas that need improvement. There is a plan in place to recruit internally for the registered manager post. The provider has instructed a recruitment agency to help to locate quality applicants for the vacant posts within the core staff team. The staff are aware of what the service does well. Specifically, their ability to develop good relationships with the young people. They are also effective in encouraging the young people to take up opportunities in the community that promote their self-confidence and self-esteem. The provider was unhappy with the previous arrangements for external auditing. They have instructed a new independent visitor to review the statement of purpose and fulfil their responsibility under the regulations. They are seeking a more robust	

challenge to staff, to ensure they attend to the management of young people's health appropriately, as detailed in the statement of purpose and their care plans. Further training regarding medication and health issues is due for staff, to prevent further issues in this area.

Placing social workers speak highly of the services provided to the young people. One said: ' I am impressed by the staff's ability to advocate for the young people. The young person has significantly changed, they are much calmer, thoughtful and becoming much more mature.'

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 looked after children 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 the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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