

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC016600
Inspector	Tracey Ledder
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered manager	Sarah Womersley
Date of last inspection	31/01/2014

Inspection date	12/10/2014
------------------------	------------

Previous inspection	satisfactory 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
-------------------	-------------

Children and young people live in a child focused home where staff ensure they are safe and cared for well. Children and young people say they feel safe and are well looked after. They feel reassured that they are actively looked for when they are missing; this makes them feel like they matter. The relationships in the home are built on mutual trust and respect.

Staff actively look for children and young people who go missing from the home. Good parenting skills are evident and this ensures children and young people's safe and early return to the home. Relationships with the police are good and positively affect the safety of the children and young people in the home and in the wider community.

Children and young people are listened to and their wishes and feelings are taken into account. They are supported to attend meetings about their future and to actively participate. When they do not feel able to participate, staff advocate strongly on their behalf.

Children and young people have a good understanding of risk taking behaviours and there is evidence that drug misuse and anti-social behaviour has reduced. These issues are openly discussed between staff and in one-to-one key work sessions with

children and young people.

The staff team is effective at helping children and young people to achieve in education. All children and young people have made progress from their starting positions and are engaged in some form of learning. The service employs home tutors for children who are not currently in education, work or training. This ensures that children and young people receive bespoke educational packages based on their individual learning needs.

There is a current lack of independent scrutiny and challenge of the service. This shortfall is a Regulatory breach and limits the ability of leaders and managers to ensure that the home is constantly challenged to keep making improvements in service delivery.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This private children's home is registered for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The home provides individual support and preparation for independent living and offers an educational outreach service to support young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
31/10/2013	Full	good
25/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
26/07/2012	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
33 (2001)	appoint, at the registered provider's expense, an independent person to visit and report on the children's home in accordance with this regulation (Regulation 33 (1))	24/11/2014
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for—(a) monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at appropriate intervals least once in every 3 months. (2) The registered person shall supply to HMCI a report in respect of any review conducted by him for the purposes of paragraph (1). (Regulation 34 (1) (a-b) (2))	24/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure sanctions and rewards for behaviour are clear, reasonable and fair and are understood by all staff and children. In particular ensure they are effective and compliment the overall care planning for children and young people (NMS (3.8))

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people living at the home say they feel safe and cared for by staff. Young people understand the expectations in relation to their behaviours and respect the boundaries that are in place for them. The boundaries are appropriate and interpreted by young people as positive parenting. Children are safeguarded because staff are positive parental role models and actively search for them when they go missing from the home.

Children and young people have a voice in the home. Their wishes and feelings are actively sought and acted upon. Positive behaviour strategies are used to support good behaviour and young people are motivated to engage in these process. Children and young people have a voice in deciding what the positive outcome for them will be if they adhere to the behaviour plan. This ensures children and young people feel valued and cared for.

Children and young people who are out of education show motivation in respect of the tutorial support they receive at the home. They feel that the bespoke educational plan ensures they can progress in their learning and they hold positive aspirations for their futures. Children and young people make educational progress from their starting points whether in mainstream school or taught at home.

Children and young people enjoy learning skills linked to their independence and feel supported in preparing themselves for adulthood. This preparation is integrated into their educational learning as well as in daily tasks such as shopping and healthy menu planning within the home. Young people say they enjoy planning the menu for the week ahead and being able to choose food they enjoy.

Children and young people enjoy activities in the community. They are encouraged to enjoy clubs and community activities. Young people attend Church and all children are encouraged to understand different cultures and religions and respect difference.

Children and young people actively participate in one-to-one sessions with staff. They say these sessions are helpful. Issues in respect of keeping safe and healthy are talked about in these sessions and are reinforced in the day-to-day parenting received.

Children and young people speak positively of the skills the staff team use to communicate with them. Young people report that this is an important part of their care. They are able to identify adults who they can talk to day or night. Relationships are built on trust and mutual respect.

Quality of care

good

Children and young people live in a warm comfortable home. They are provided with individualised bedrooms that are well furnished. There is plenty of shared space and the kitchen is the heart of the home. Children, young people and staff spend time in the kitchen drinking tea and talking about their day. There is a relaxed homely feel to the house.

Education is an important part of the ethos of the home. The leaders and managers employ private educational tutors to work with children and young people who are not in education. Educational assessments are undertaken and ensure bespoke learning plans are devised which motivate children and young people to learn. Children and young people make good progress in their education from their starting points. The staff in the home advocates strongly ensuring children and young people receive education. Managers will challenge any shortfalls to this provision when appropriate to do so.

Children and young people have clear and effective boundaries within the home. One young person said that the 'rules are fair' and that 'everyone knows what is expected of them'. Managers say that they want to improve the management of positive behaviour by planning more creative use of sanctions. Children and young people are currently motivated by positive reinforcement and rewards strategies used by staff.

There have been no formal complaints received from children and young people in respect of the care they receive. Previous residents who are now adults still keep in touch with the staff for support and guidance and this is encouraged by the leaders and managers of the home. This practice supports young people to feel secure in planning for independence as they also feel that they could keep in touch once they have left the care of the home.

Keeping children and young people safe

good

There are clear policies and procedures in place to keep children and young people safe and these are consistently applied to practice by staff and are effective. Incidents of children and young people missing from home are managed in a proactive way. Children and young people are provided with mobile phones to ensure that staff can keep in touch with them when missing; they say that 'this can be annoying but at least I know they worry about me.' Staff check on children and young people when they are out in the community and one young person said 'I like this and I want to stay here.'

Staff understand child sexual exploitation. They undertake return from missing interviews and complete a child sexual exploitation screening tool every time a child or young person goes missing. The active approach taken by the staff allows intelligence linked to the whereabouts of children and young people to be shared

with the Police. This supports the local risk management strategy for children missing from home in the wider community.

The staff do not rely on the police to be out looking for the children and young people. They find and return the children and young people the majority of the time. Knocking on doors and holding difficult conversations is a regular activity undertaken by staff to promote safe and early return of the children and young people. Regular contact is kept with children who are missing from care and it is not until all children are safe and returned to the home that staff cease their searching.

Care plans clearly identify risks for children and young people. Staff review and update these plans regularly. As such, the care provided meets the changing and emerging needs of the children and young people. When children and young people are at risk of harm the staff ensure multi-agency meetings take place promptly.

Missing children is a current theme within the home. However, this is being effectively tackled to ensure that the frequency of children and young people going missing is reduced. Staff identify early triggers to children going missing from the home and act on them. The leaders and managers recently made a decision to move on one young person due to their behaviour impacting negatively on the other residents and their safety.

There is evidence of a reduction in anti-social behaviour for some young people since living at the home. One young person was keen to report how proud she was that she had kept out of trouble since living at the home. It was her view that this was because she was being looked after well and did not need to commit crime as all her needs are being met.

Leadership and management

adequate

The Registered Manager remains in post and is suitably experienced and qualified to undertake the role. The management team are well established and are respected by the children, young people and the staff group. Concerns coming from the last inspection have been suitably acted on. However, the monitoring of the home is not currently in line with Regulation. This means there is a lack of external scrutiny and challenge being afforded to the home. However, the management team have made steps to address this issue. Leaders and managers of the home have undertaken an review of the quality of the service. However, a copy of the report has not been submitted to Ofsted as required.

The location of the home has not been formally risk assessed. The stability and longevity of the staff team ensures that they are aware of the strengths and risks of the community. However, the lack of a written document affects the ability of commissioning teams to consider wider issues for children and young people they may wish to place.

Supervision and staff appraisals are not recorded in a timely way. Staff report good supervision is provided, however, the current delay in recording is outside of the policy. This means that staff are not provided with a written account of the meeting in order to reflect or ensure actions are carried out as agreed. This does not currently impact on the care of the children and young people negatively.

The dedicated management team drives the child centred ethos of the home. They get involved with the day-to-day running of the home. They are available for the children, young people and staff. This creates a shared responsibility for staff and ensures consistent care for children and young people.

Leaders and managers communicate well and have good relationships with other agencies, in particular the police. This means that the police understand what the home is trying to achieve in order for the children and young people in their care to be safe.

Leaders and managers have a development plan in place that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the service. They have a good understanding of what the home can and cannot provide. Leaders and managers are committed to ongoing development for them and the team. This means that they continue to safely care for children and young people and have an understanding of their needs and current issues.

There is a clear statement of purpose and a children's guide in place. Young people have helped on the development of these documents. One of the aims of the home is to 'make children smile'. Children and young people say that the home achieves this aim. This refreshing focus sits neatly with the ethos of the home.

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.