

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC023636
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Childhood First
Registered person address	Childhood First 210 Borough High Street LONDON SE1 1JX
Responsible individual	Stephen Blunden
Registered manager	Gary John Yexley
Date of last inspection	29/01/2014

Inspection date	04/08/2014
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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	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a good service that has continued to develop since the last inspection. The charitable organisation has implemented changes in its structure since the last inspection. New, senior posts taking the lead for statutory compliance are now in place. These changes show commitment to ensuring meeting changing statutory compliance. Additionally, the management and staff team have a shown continued commitment in improving the quality of care over the last year.

Children receive well planned and individualised care and their views are central to all aspects of the operation and practice of the home. This fits very much into the therapeutic model the home delivers. Staff are committed to providing high quality care and this promotes positive outcomes for children. Relationships between staff and children are respectful, professional and trusting. Children respond extremely well to the relationships they form with staff and clearly enjoy their presence. Staff have high aspirations for children and this contributes to their progress, which can be seen in behaviour management and successful transition to foster care.

Children thrive in a safe and nurturing environment where they receive very good standards of care, support and guidance. Sensitive and supportive relationships between children and staff underpin a culture of safety. Children feel safe, well cared for and know the staff will protect them from harm. Children say they are

happy at the home and that, 'staff know me really well, and I am happy here,' and 'They always keep me safe,' stated one child.

There is good quality management and a vision to provide excellent quality of care and to continually improve. Quality assurance is good which enables staff to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home. Monitoring systems are being developed further to fully meet statutory requirements.

Feedback from social workers includes, 'I am very happy with this placement.' 'Staff work well in transition planning for children' and 'it is a safe placement.'

Shortfalls identified at this inspection relate to current system of recording of visitors and the impact it may have on fire safety, ensuring consents are in place for the use of door alarms, better evidence the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills and continue to develop staff's knowledge around e-safety and sexual exploitation. In addition, the service needs to have more help line contact details, visible for children to access, and to continue addressing the work required as a result of the very recent fire audit.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for 10 children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
18/09/2013	Full	outstanding
18/03/2013	Interim	good progress
20/06/2012	Full	outstanding

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
32 (2001)	where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the children's home the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it are complied with in respect of the home; specifically addressing all requirements made as a result of the recent fire audit. (Regulation 32 (1A) (b))	26/09/2014

Recommendations

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

account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure consent from a person with parental responsibility is clearly documented on each child's file. This specifically relates to the use of bedroom door alarms (Volume 5, Statutory Guidance, para 2.111)
- provide further training that keeps staff up to date with professional, legal and practice developments; specifically around e safety and child sexual exploitation (NMS 18.1)
- better evidence the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills (NMS 10)
- provide more help line numbers for children (NMS 1.5)
- reconsider the current signing in and out system to ensure staff in charge know who is in the house at all times, and the impact the current system may have on fire safety procedures. (NMS 4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children make very good progress while living at the home.

Children are supported to understand their backgrounds and to develop positive self-views and resilience. The stable staff team and the excellent relationships developed, enables children to reflect on their pasts without fear and in a safe environment. Children are supported to become confident and establish and maintain appropriate relationships with others. The strong therapeutic model used at the home encourages children to talk openly about their fears and worries in a safe environment. Children are happy at the home and in engage comfortably with staff.

Children receive very good health care as a result of detailed health care plans and thorough attention by staff. Integrated throughout a child's experience at the home is the therapeutic approach to meet individual emotional and psychological needs. Children progress in these areas as a result of on-going support from highly skilled and competent staff.

Children benefit from living in a home where the value of education is promoted and encouraged. Children's educational needs commence once they wake up, with careful consideration given to ensuring their day starts positively. All children attend the organisation's school, located close by. Attendance levels are very good for the vast majority of children. Any child not able to engage in the school is supported in the home by school staff until they can re-engage. Children benefit from good levels of support during the school day and after, at the home. Staff support children with reading when they return from school. As a result children make good progress and achieve well.

Children regularly contribute to the way the home is run through daily therapeutic meetings and one to ones with key staff. Examples include a new BMX bike track, choices of food and activities. Children feel valued and listened to. Feedback from children confirm this; 'staff are great, they listen to what we say' and 'we talk all the time.' Children access a wide range of activities both on and off site which they enjoy. This helps develop their social experiences and supports integration into the wider community. In addition to contributing to how the home is run, children are able to express their feelings and thoughts within the community meetings and other support meetings.

Children are readily able to contact families and friends. They are supported to visit family who may live some distance away. This enables children to maintain and improve family relationships safely and with confidence.

Transition to independence and adult life is not applicable to this home due to the

young ages of the children. There is an effective process for transition in and moving on, overseen by the placement family support worker who has close contact with local authorities and families. Transitions are smooth and well planned.

Quality of care

good

A real strength of the home are the relationships staff achieve with the children. Relationships are both constructive and positive, with clear and sensitively managed boundaries. Detailed day to day planning, with the needs of the children at the heart of staff practice, provides children with stability, a sense of security and feeling very well cared for.

Children are encouraged to voice their views and opinions in numerous ways such as daily interaction with staff, key worker meetings and therapeutic community meetings. Any concerns or worries are directed to the community meetings where children are supported in challenging one another, or staff, and in voicing their feelings if they are not happy about something. Issues children may be unhappy about are effectively resolved in this forum. This is in line with the therapeutic model and is seen as a healthy way of enabling children to overcome concerns with support from the group. Formal processes for making a complaint are in place, with information clearly visible in the home, but lacking in the contact numbers of outside agencies.

Children make very good progress in education. The value of education is embedded into the therapeutic ethos of the home and staff work hard to ensure children make good progress and achieve good attendance. The residential team work closely with the organisation's school, located close by and a sense of community between both sites is promoted. Regular joint meetings occur between the school and home staff, and residential staff are present in the school daily. Each child's educational progress is discussed regularly during individual case discussions, key worker meetings and with the local authorities' education departments. In addition, the school works closely with the local authority virtual schools provision. This results in consistency of care. All educational plans are in place and updated termly.

Detailed and highly individualised care plans outline how each child's needs will be supported and met. Plans include information from a child's perspective. They identify support needs in relation to their specific vulnerabilities, with strategies to help them through difficult times. Regular reviewing of these plans enables children and staff to monitor progress and re-focus if necessary.

The home provides a healthy environment where children are able to access the services and support they need to meet their physical, emotional and psychological health needs. Children receive high quality healthy food, provided by a cook with good knowledge of individual likes and dislikes. She is aware of how textures and

smells can impact on children's dietary intake and provides a bespoke service to ensure all children receive a good provision. Children enjoy a wide range of activities which they have a voice in choosing. Staff supervision is high, ensuring their safety at all times. Risk assessments of activities are undertaken to lessen the risks identified. Sound medication procedures are in place, providing safe administration. Children stated 'the food is great' and 'I love the new BMX bike track; it keeps me fit.'

The home is comfortable, spacious and maintained. There is an on-going programme of redecoration and refurbishment to those areas looking tired. Children personalise their bedrooms and this gives them a sense of belonging. The home has a warm and inviting feel which provides a nurturing home for children to grow and develop.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home functions around a clinical, therapeutic model providing a safe environment, promoting group living and learning where safeguarding and protecting children is seen as a priority. Pro-active safeguarding practice means that all children have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Children report they feel safe at the home. 'I feel safe here, I like the staff and they keep us safe' was a comment received from a child.

Staff are pro-active in supporting children's safety and they work in partnership with other agencies in order to facilitate this. Staff receive training on child protection and have guidance in place for them to follow. This ensures they have the awareness and knowledge to promote children's safety. Senior managers take the lead in child protection and make appropriate referrals to child protection agencies. Staff follow individual care plans that identify each child's vulnerabilities and associated risks. Clear risk assessments and management protect children, whilst enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Regularly updated risk assessments ensure that the children are continually guided and supported to be safe.

High levels of staffing ensure children are supervised at all times. As a result there have been no incidents of children going missing. Suitable arrangements are in place if a child did go missing. Staff are acutely aware of the dangers relating to the location of the home that children may face, if they did go missing. Local protocols are in place. Supervision at night is enhanced by the use of bedroom door alarms so staff are aware if a child gets up and can offer support if necessary. This is acknowledged in the homes Statement of Purpose, but no written consents are in place from the local authorities.

Staff work in accordance with the homes therapeutic model and respond to negative behaviours consistently and sensitively. Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. The excellent relationship between staff and children has resulted in mutual respect and trust. Sanctions, physical interventions and serious incidents are

rare. This is a positive reflection upon the level of supervision and staff engagement with the children. Staff use restorative practices rather than sanctions which underpins the home's therapeutic approach to behaviour management. Much work has been done around the recording of physical intervention since January 2014 and records are now more detailed with good reflection. When physical interventions do occur, staff follow strict procedures that ensure children's safety is further enhanced. Evidence shows any physical intervention is only used as a last resort, to prevent injury to the children, others or property. High staffing and close supervision results in limited opportunities for bullying behaviours. Staff are vigilant and any signs are dealt with immediately. Overall behaviours improve greatly from when children first arrive at the home.

Children are protected by the home's robust recruitment procedures, which ensure that all necessary background checks are carried out before newly appointed staff commence employment. These procedures ensure adults are safe to work with children, whilst being of good character and integrity. Visitors sign in and out at the main office, but not the individual house. This means staff in charge of the shift may not be aware who is in the house at all times. This system needs reconsidering as it may have an impact on fire safety in the home.

Any incident relating to safeguarding or child protection is promptly notified to the correct agency. Child protection agencies report no concerns about the home's management of such incidents.

All health and safety checks and inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals ensuring it is a safe environment. This includes checks of firefighting equipment, alarm systems, electrical and gas installations. All children know what to do in the event of a fire and regular drills ensures this knowledge is embedded in practice. Records do not show detailed reflection of the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills. A recent fire audit has identified areas that need addressing, some have already been addressed, others have not.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post for seven years and is also the Registered Manager for a sister home, located next to this home. He has the skills and experience to manage this home and is currently working towards completing a level 5 qualification in leadership and management. He holds a MA in Psychoanalytic observational studies, which fits in with the ethos of this service.

An effective management team is in place, even when the manager is not there. The staff team are committed to providing therapeutic care enabling children to make healthy attachments. A change to the senior staffing structure in the organisation has seen the introduction of dedicated statutory compliance managers. This shows a clear commitment to further develop the service and to building on improvements

already made. The service is currently working on its development plan, in order to sit outside the organisational development plan and is bespoke to the home. The one requirement made at the last inspection has been met. A review has been undertaken of how the manager addresses identified patterns in behaviour management and the monitoring of accidents and injuries sustained in the home. As a result the manager has been able to take action as necessary. Both internal and external monitoring has improved with further development planned.

There is a full, experienced and permanent staff team and this promotes stability for children. Staff receive good training and regular supervision. New staff receive support from senior staff on an individual and group basis. All staff participate in individual and group meetings as part of their supervision. In addition a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist provides support for the staff. This enables staff to have a thorough understanding of the children and opportunities to reflect. New staff undertake induction training as well as a thorough introduction to their clinical model. They then go on to undertake further recommended qualifications. Overall staff have very good theoretical knowledge for ensuring the home is a positive experience for young people.

There is a clear and up to date Statement of Purpose for the home which describes what it intends to achieve and deliver. Additionally, there is a young person's guide which is currently being reviewed and updated in line with the organisations development plan. The guide ensures children are aware of what to expect and the support they will receive. These documents enable all relevant individuals to have a clear idea of how the home operates and aids correct placement planning.

All records are stored safely and securely. They are checked regularly to ensure they are up to date and provide a clear and accurate history of each child's time at the home.

All significant events are reported promptly to all relevant agencies, to ensure the home is accountable in promoting children's well-being.

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.