

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	09/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC023636
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Childhood First
Registered provider address	Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy, 210 Borough High Street, London SE1 1JX

Responsible individual	Stephen Blunden
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Liz Driver

Inspection date	09/11/2016
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC023636

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The home delivers high-quality therapeutic care covering all aspects of a child's needs. The staff are trained and experienced in delivering the organisation's chosen form of therapeutic care.
- There is a strong commitment to keeping children safe and protecting them from harm. The staff's collaborative working with a wide range of professionals ensures that children are protected and that they feel safe.
- As a result of the skills that staff have in delivering the therapeutic care, the children make outstanding progress in relation to their emotional needs, educational attendance and achievements, and in addressing their previous traumatic life experiences.
- There are excellent relationships between the staff and the children in their care. The staff receive professional support from the leaders and managers. Consequently, the staff are motivated to deliver consistently high standards of care.
- Children develop strong attachments to staff over a period of time. Children and families form trusting and supportive relationships with the staff.
- A well-defined and efficient organisational structure promotes change and improvement.
- A new manager has been appointed and taken up role with minimal impact on the children. The new manager is very suitably qualified, experienced and skilled to carry out all aspects of a manager's role.
- As a result of detailed pre-admission planning and sensitive moving in arrangements, children quickly settle into the home and embrace the therapeutic culture that the staff promote.
- Monitoring of the services and its practices is exceptional. A full range of monitoring and auditing systems results in detailed analysis of the current provision and in the future planning and development of the service. There is clear and effective oversight by senior managers and leaders across the organisation.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to accommodate up to 10 children, irrespective of gender, aged five to 14. Children move on at the age of 14. The home specialises in the treatment of children who present with severe emotional and/or behavioural problems. The home is a specialist therapeutic residential community providing care and treatment to psychologically traumatised children. It is operated by a charitable organisation.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/12/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/07/2015	Full	Good
11/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/08/2014	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding

The home provides a supportive, nurturing environment where children develop a sense of stability and belonging. They build trusting relationships with the staff, and this adds to their sense of security. As a result, children are more able to engage in the therapeutic treatment and guidance that they receive from skilled practitioners.

Children make excellent progress in making healthy attachments, processing feelings and relating to others. The therapeutic treatment that they receive enables children to successfully gain confidence in living together with others.

Children receive individual psychotherapy sessions. Good collaboration between care, education and therapy teams ensures that children's needs are properly understood by all the adults who care for them. Staff are confident and consistent in the way that they meet these needs, and, as a result, children make healthy attachments and outstanding progress in their ability to process their feelings and relate to others.

Data is used well to analyse the effectiveness of therapeutic care and to tailor interventions to individual children's needs.

The health needs of children are very well met through systematic practice. Children are encouraged to make healthy life style choices, from exercise to healthy eating. Mealtimes are very social occasions with staff promoting social skills such as good table manners. Children respond very positively to staff guidance. Fresh, home cooked food is enjoyed by the children. One child said, 'We get really good food. I love the food here.' A dietician undertakes useful analysis of children's diets, which is used by the cook to ensure that their nutritional needs are met. For one child, this led to an increase in iron in their diet, leading to improvements in their physical and emotional health.

Children are encouraged to engage in activities depending on their particular interests and abilities. These activities include horse riding, swimming, karate, Scouts, Guides, football and gymnastics. They promote wider social interactions and help children to develop social skills and self-esteem. Children also have access to a large garden which they enjoy and where staff spend much time playing with them.

Children attend school daily and the programme of learning is adapted to ensure that it meets all their needs, both educationally and emotionally. Care and school

staff communicate throughout the day to make sure that every child has a successful school day.

The staff work hard to facilitate positive contact for each child and their family. The service's placement and family support officer provides a link between the home, local authority and families of the children. This high-quality support is given to families to ensure that they are kept up to date and well informed of all aspects of their child's care and treatment, and decisions made. An example of this can be seen when families are not able to be present at their child's placement review. The placement and family support officer will visit the family prior to the review to read through the pre-review report and give them the opportunity to have a voice at the review.

Detailed and comprehensive referral systems result in the correct placement for children. Children settle in quickly and soon engage in the community living style of the provision. They can then start to make progress with understanding their previous traumatic life experiences. It is very rare for the service to end a placement as their referral and decision making processes are highly effective.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Managers and leaders have a thorough understanding of the particular risk associated with each child, and are familiar with the policies and procedures that they should follow when concerns arise. Children build trusting relationships with staff and develop the confidence to share and reflect on their past traumatic experiences. Staff listen, respond sensitively and take effective action when child protection concerns are raised. This ensures that children feel supported and cared for when at their most vulnerable. Staff are able to recognise actual and potential harm and abuse. All staff receive child protection awareness training, and the senior management team have received advanced child protection training. Safeguarding is a weekly agenda item for the staff meeting where staff raise concerns. All staff have received training around female genital mutilation and 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding lead has completed 'Train the Trainer' for the delivery of 'Prevent' training. Other training such as drug and alcohol awareness is planned. Effective arrangements are in place to refer safeguarding matters to external safeguarding agencies. Records are well kept and senior managers maintain oversight and scrutiny of safeguarding matters through a three-monthly meeting. The staff have a very good knowledge of e-safety and child sexual exploitation risks. Staff supervise children's use of the internet at all times due to their young ages. Staff support children to understand the risks associated with all forms of social media. Risk assessments around e-safety and child sexual exploitation inform	

staff how to manage individual or group risks. As a result, there have been no incidents or concerns.

Behaviour management systems ensure that children are safely managed. This is an area of expertise at the service. A calm and skilled approach is adopted to defuse evolving incidents. Children respond very well to clear boundaries set by the staff. Over time, children develop more appropriate ways of communicating their feelings to others. Children are encouraged to raise matters that concern them in group or individual meetings or with their key worker. The staff are competent to make the right decisions when receiving concerning information.

All children have a fully individualised risk assessment. This is developed based on knowledge of the child's history alongside the challenging behaviours and risk that they present. Risk assessments inform the staff of the behaviour management strategies to be used, and are highly effective in practice. Staff use interventions that complement the home's therapeutic approach. Risk assessments are updated and reviewed regularly, and, when necessary, are amended between reviews. Reflective work with the child and staff is firmly embedded in practice and overseen by the manager and senior leaders. There have been no incidents of children going missing. The staff are aware of the procedure to follow if a child did go missing.

All health and safety checks are carried out, recorded and audited to a high standard. All external tradesmen are closely supervised and provided with contracts and protocols, enhancing the safety of the children. Recruitment procedures are thorough and ensure that all adults who are employed at the home are suitable to work with children. Recruitment interviews thoroughly explore an individual's motivation for working with vulnerable children and assess the candidate's ability to form strong, trusting relationships. Consequently, children are cared for by skilled practitioners who prioritise the safety and well-being of those living at the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home's previous registered manager left in September 2016 after gaining promotion within the organisation. A carefully considered and extremely well organised succession plan has worked well. The new manager has settled in well and has gained the full support of the staff team. Children relate to him easily and minimal disruption has resulted for the children. The current manager is very well equipped to fulfil the role as manager. He has over 16 years' experience working in therapeutic settings, 10 of these as a registered manager. He has suitable qualifications relating to care and management, plus a post graduate certificate in applied systemic therapy which enables him to fully engage in the organisation's chosen therapeutic method. His application to register as manager is currently being processed by Ofsted.	

The staff team is a real strength of this service. The staff members form caring and professional relationships with the children. Recently, the service has increased the number of staff in each team and new staff are currently completing their induction programme. They are supported by a stable team of long-standing staff who are suitably qualified and trained, including in the home's therapeutic care model. A comprehensive range of training courses provide staff with opportunity to update their skills and knowledge, in order that they are able to fully meet the individual needs of the children.

The staff say that they receive good support from leaders and managers, and this helps them to undertake their role effectively. Many avenues exist for staff to reflect on their practice and consider the emotional impact that the work has on them.

The promotion of equality and diversity is embedded within the culture of the service. There is a culture of openness and acceptance within the day-to-day life at the home. Children are encouraged to build close relationships with the staff over time where they feel safe to explore their personal beliefs, views and attitudes. These relationships also provide for children to be challenged about their attitudes and behaviours where necessary. One child said, 'I can say anything to the staff. They always listen.'

Well-established systems allow for detailed monitoring and auditing of the quality of care. This includes feedback from stakeholders, including professionals and family members. A professional said, 'The staff have shown themselves to be very proactive and efficient to date and are meeting the child's needs.' The detail in reports, such as monthly quality of care reports and six-monthly review reports, is outstanding. The manager acts on any recommendations made as a result of the independent visitor's report and senior managers have a clear oversight of all reports. This enables leaders and managers to address any day-to-day issues and plan for the future development of the service.

The home is well equipped, well maintained and homely. Facilities meet the needs of the children. Children especially enjoy the large garden and are appreciative of the extra mile that the maintenance person goes to provide an outdoor area that they enjoy and can learn from. For example, he has created a 'beetle mound' so that children can get closer to nature and experience learning outside of the classroom.

The statement of purpose is kept under review, and is amended to reflect changing circumstances and practice developments. It is an accurate and informative description of the service provided.

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 that 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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