

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	08/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC025695
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	St Christopher's Fellowship
Registered provider address	1 Putney High Street, London SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual	Ron Giddens
Registered manager	Position vacant
Inspector	Barnaby Dowell

Inspection date	08/11/2016
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 Sustained effectiveness. One requirement and one recommendation resulted from the last full inspection, and the home addressed both of these successfully. There are no requirements or recommendations from this inspection. The home environment has improved. Repairs and maintenance occur promptly and regularly. A further programme of redecoration is in process. Young people are presently choosing a fresh colour scheme for their bedroom areas. Managers have secured funding and volunteers from a major multinational company to improve the garden area and purchase new furniture. Consequently, young people continue to develop a genuine sense of pride in their home. Each young person is presently engaged in education. Staff are now more rigorous in removing televisions and access to leisure equipment if young people refuse to attend school. On arrival in the home, staff access education quickly via established relationships with the host local authority. Staff are proactive and inventive in offering educational activities, which are incorporated into weekly planners. Reading improvement activities are skilfully interlinked with independent living skills exercises. This offers young people structured routines and improved engagement in education. The registered manager left the home via a planned departure in August 2016. She was replaced by her former deputy and a new deputy manager, promoted from within the existing staff team. This ensured continuity and consistency. Ofsted has received an application for formal registration and is presently seeking references. The transition occurred in a planned manner over an extended period of time with minimal disruption to staff and young people. The morale of the staff team remains high, with no departures since the last full inspection. Staff understand the statement of purpose and work consistently to enforce behavioural boundaries. Their work is underpinned by a strong understanding of the therapeutic principles of the home and mutual support. For example, the staff team provides consistent motivational notes and conversations with one young person who is struggling with self-esteem issues.	

The staff team has been strengthened by the safe recruitment of three new permanent members of staff. Their induction is supported by a comprehensive training package and the introduction of a new mentoring system for new staff members.

Outcomes for young people remain positive. These remain supported by well-managed contact with parents and relatives. Two young people have successfully transitioned from the home. One placing professional comments, 'He has thrived and made so much progress in your care.' Case records indicate a high degree of planning and a high level of staff support. Recently, managers acted to terminate a disruptive placement. This helped to maintain the stability of the home.

Young people continue to make progress and are happy. They continue to engage well in therapeutic services and have good access to support services, such as advocacy. Staff take clear and visible pleasure in the achievements of young people. An 'Oscar-style' awards ceremony occurred this summer, in which young people engaged well.

Staff and young people enjoyed a successful holiday to an amusement park over the summer period. Notable recent achievements include membership of the local Children in Care Council, the completion of a ten kilometre road race and a citizenship challenge. The 'house president' continues to act as a strong source of advocacy and inspiration to the other young people.

Young people reduce risk-taking behaviour, such as running from the home. They recognise this progress. One young person comments, 'It feels really good not to be arrested any more.' There has been one recorded episode of missing behaviour since the last full inspection. This marks a major reduction. Young people remain supported by thorough and comprehensive risk assessments and good levels of case recording. The home continues to access advice and guidance from the local authority's child sexual exploitation risk analyst, who is able to access social media accounts if specific concerns arise. This promotes a positive safeguarding culture.

Information about this children's home

The provider is a registered childcare charity and housing association that has a number of different services registered with Ofsted. This home provides care and accommodation for up to eight children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
26/04/2016	Full	Good
04/01/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/06/2015	Full	Good
29/12/2014	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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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