

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	22/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC025695
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	St Christopher's Fellowship 321509, 207782
Registered person address	1 Putney High Street, London, SW15 1SZ

Responsible individual	Mr Jonathan Farrow
Registered manager	Mrs Agata Dokszeicz
Inspector	Mr Barnaby Dowell

Inspection date	22/06/2015 and 23/6/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC025695

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people make progress from the point of moving into this home. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of education. Young people who have previously failed to achieve in education have recently completed examinations in basic English and Maths.
- Care is provided by a staff team who access a broad training program. Staff are encouraged to consider new approaches and strategies to dealing with challenging behaviours.
- Staff work proactively to identify and manage areas of risk. This has resulted in there being no reports of young people missing since March 2015. Young people are engaged in the help and support being offered in the home.
- Managers provide strong support for staff and advocate consistently for young people. Recently she argued for an amended curriculum for a young person struggling in education. This has offered another opportunity for engagement in education.
- Young people engage in community-based activities, this includes membership of local cricket and football club, encouraging them to develop their own identities and stay healthy.
- Staff receive reflective supervision. This enables them to develop their practice and enhance their understanding of young people's behaviours.
- Young people's achievements are celebrated. There is a planned 'Oscar Style' awards ceremony planned for this summer, this encourages motivation and commitment to education and positive behaviour.

- Staff are in regular contact with key professionals. Detailed monthly reports provide an in-depth account of young people's progress. This assists key professionals to plan for young people.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed and furnished so as to (i) meet the needs of each child; and (ii) enable each child to participate in the daily life of the home. (The Guide, page 13, paragraph 6 c (i and ii))
- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and resilience to cope without the home's support and; where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. (The Guide, page 17, paragraph 3.27)

Full report

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 behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/12/2014	CH – Interim	sustained effectiveness
16/06/2014	CH – Full	Good
02/12/2013	CH – Interim	Satisfactory Progress
14/05/2013	CH – Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people are happy in the home. One says, 'I feel happy here, people listen to me and I am safe.' They feel supported and cared for. Social workers report, 'Young people have visibly grown in confidence and flourish.' They feel represented and empowered. Communication between staff and young people is both open and honest, respect is mutual. Weekly residents meetings provide young people with opportunities to plan for activities and discuss any concerns they may have. These meetings are attended by a member of staff who takes notes and feeds back to the manager. Residents meetings recently made suggestions for the colour scheme for the house redecoration, one saying 'It's going to look really nice.' Young people recently enjoyed sitting on an interview panel to help recruit new staff. They found this experience very rewarding. Residents meetings have helped with the planning for the home's summer holidays. For some young people this will be a first visit to the seaside. Young people plan activities with staff. Successful planning for these activities raises self-esteem and independence skills. Young people feel safe in the home. A report of bullying was effectively addressed through resident's meetings and mentoring and key work. There have been no further reports of bullying. Young people are proud of their home. Visitors are encouraged to visit the home and where possible family contact is promoted. Keyworkers give progress updates to parents (where appropriate.) This helps to promote safe contact and meaningful relationships. Young people enjoy numerous leisure pursuits. These include cricket, go-karting and monthly mentoring sessions with an internationally-known musician. This helps promote healthy living and build self esteem. Funding for a music studio has been successfully obtained from the local authority and the equipment is due to be delivered soon. Key work is regular and engaging for young people. A young person commented, 'I really enjoy this time you get to sit down and talk about anything and someone	

always listens, they got me gym membership because of it.'

Educational attainment is encouraged. Keyworkers consistently track progress on a daily basis and discuss in weekly key work sessions. These sessions also provide additional support for those young people where English is not their first language.

Keyworkers provide in-depth monthly summaries. A professional said, 'There is a holistic package of positive parenting.' Key professionals are impressed by the level of advocacy and information sharing.

Work on semi-independence skills is limited in the home. Young people do not have a clear idea of the help and assistance that they will receive on transition from their home. At present key work sessions discuss planning for meals and budgeting. This programme needs to be expanded to include: educational options, work on paying for utility bills and the possibility of visiting a semi-independent unit.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Behaviour is well managed in the home. There has been no recent usage of restraint and the usage of sanctions is limited. Staff set boundaries via communication and encouraging young people to talk about the consequences of their behaviour. This encourages young people to think before they act. There have been no children reported missing from the home since March 2015. This is a dramatic reduction on the previous six months and a sign of major progress. Young people comment, 'There is no point in staying out, and we do stuff with staff here.' The reduction has added stability to the home. Staff have addressed missing via various strategies. From ensuring provision of travel funds, mobile phone prompts and sharing information with friends and family. The local police officer acts as a source of advice and guidance. This gives a firm and reassuring message to young people. A new counselling/mentoring service has been commissioned by managers. It provides a new nurturing approach for staff and one-to-one support for young people. Young people engage well with this service and feel valued. They learn to manage their own behaviours, i.e. leaving the room when they begin to feel angry. Staff learn new skills from this service. They have been encouraged to think about their tone of voice when speaking to young people. This has helped improve relationships between staff and young people.	

Young people understand why they are looked after. Keyworkers encourage them to maintain their own religions and contact with their respective communities. Three young people are regular attenders at the local mosque.

Young people know how to complain. Following a complaint the manager will meet with the young person directly to offer a response. If this is not satisfactory a referral to an independent advocate is made.

Safeguarding practice is strong. Recently, staff took careful note of a car number plate which had attempted to pick up a vulnerable resident from outside the home. This information was passed to police and protective action was taken.

Young people are kept safe by thorough risk assessments. These are reviewed monthly by the manager and shared with the allocated social worker. For example, a key work session discovered an alleged threat to use a knife. Information was subsequently shared and safety measures were introduced.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The new manager has been in post since March 2015. She has achieved a great deal of progress in a short period of time. She is proactive and child centred with a clear vision for the future development of the service. The décor in the home needs updating. This has unsettled young people and staff. Funding has been obtained for this work to begin. Young people have chosen a colour scheme for the living room. The manager has addressed concerns over case recording. There is strong management oversight on all cases. The manager calls professionals meetings to address issues around drift and delay. The home has capacity for two emergency beds. The manager recognises that an admission may unsettle the current residents and has drafted a new admission procedure. Inappropriate referrals are now screened-out effectively. The updated Statement of Purpose clearly outlines this. Investment in staff has been prioritised. Improved supervision and appraisals with a clear schedule of training have left staff 'buzzing and motivated'. In the words of	

one member of staff, 'The manager has introduced a new culture for positive change; staff now feel empowered and valued.'

Independent visits have been carried out on a monthly basis. Management value the input of this service and reports indicate robust and appropriate challenge.

There is a clear vision for service development. Training on social pedagogy and the implementation of attachment-style interviewing has impressed outside professionals and engaged staff. This information will be shared with key professionals to improve information sharing.

Young people each have an allocated keyworker. The home is now fully staffed. Four new members of staff have been safely and successfully recruited. Plans are in place to assign each member of staff a 'championing' role within the service. This role will reflect their own individual skills and expertise.

Staffing levels have been increased to safer levels. The new workers have been safely integrated into the shift roster. Three staff are present during waking hours. The house limits the use of agency staff to those with prior approval of the manager and knowledge of the house. This ensures continuity of care for young people.

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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