

SC025712

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is privately run and managed.

Inspection dates: 8 November 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None.

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people benefit from well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively and contributes to considerable change and improvement in their lives. Young people enjoy warm and secure relationships with staff, and benefit from positive relationships with each other.
- Positive behaviour is actively praised, supported and encouraged. Harmonious relationships are embraced, and exist between staff and young people.
- The home meets the aims and objectives, as set out in its statement of purpose. The home provides an exceptionally good-quality service for young people, and can demonstrate the positive difference and impact it has made to their lives.
- Staff consistently have high aspirations for young people and support their full participation in education. Staff actively encourage young people to attend school on a regular basis and there are clear expectations for young people to attend. Consequently, young people enjoy exceptionally good attendance at their education provisions and make good progress in their learning, taking into account their starting points.
- Young people enjoy a diverse range of exciting and enjoyable activities. They are kept well entertained, and are positively occupied. Young people benefit from positive experiences, and are able to try out new activities of their choice. Their hobbies, talents and interests are recognised and encouraged.
- Young people enjoy living at the home. They are kept safe, and have a strong sense of personal safety. Their safety is consistently at the forefront of staff practice, irrespective of the challenges this presents. Staff have a good understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of young people, and take appropriate action to address them. Risks associated with young people are managed safely and effectively by staff.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The home proactively encourages and supports young people's education. However, not all young people currently have a personal education plan to promote their educational achievement, progress and learning.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
14/09/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that relevant plans are obtained from the placing authority. This relates specifically to ensuring all young people have a personal education plan in place. ('Guide to the children homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.1.)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The young person resident at the time of the last inspection has left the home, having moved onto alternative care provision in accordance with their plan. Both young people currently living at the home are new admissions. Young people have settled in extremely well and report that they really enjoy living at the home. One young person reported, 'I came for a visit first and then a sleep over. Then I lived here. I like it here. I really like the staff, they're so easy to communicate with. I've settled in.'

Young people make good progress as a result of effective, high-quality support from staff. They benefit from well-planned, highly individualised care that promotes their needs effectively and contributes to change and improvement in their lives. Young people make good progress, taking into account their individual starting points, across all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development.

Young people benefit from warm and secure relationships with staff, and enjoy very positive relationships with each other. Staff provide young people with continuity of care so they have consistency and stability in their lives. Young people are kept safe, and have a very strong sense of personal safety. One young person described the home as being 'fun, chilled out', and said, 'It's excellent here.' They reported, 'I want to stay here because I know what the staff are like and we're used to each other. I don't have a complaint. The only complaint I have is how come it's so good?... staff are fun, calm and they're good with kids.'

Staff consistently have high aspirations for young people. They actively promote their regular school attendance and support their full participation in education. Currently, one young person is educated at the home on a temporary basis. He completes school work with good support and encouragement from staff, and wears full school uniform each day, to prepare him for his return to school life. A new school has been identified for him to attend in the near future. However, the young person requires a personal education plan to support his future progress and learning. The other young person attends an alternative educational provision, and has an education and healthcare plan in place. Both young people enjoy good attendance and make good progress in their education, taking into account their starting points.

There are regular opportunities for young people to experience new and exciting activities. Their hobbies, talents and interests are actively encouraged. Young people enjoy playing sports, bike riding, cinema, music, reading, cooking and going on walks and jogging with staff. They develop social skills and show increased self-confidence as a result of their participation in these constructive activities. One young person reported, 'It's brilliant. Everyone's always happy. There's always lots of laughter. We do lots of activities and the staff are really friendly.'

Young people benefit from the support they need to be healthy, and enjoy good health. They are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician, and attend their routine health appointments with support from staff. Specialist support is sourced for young people who require additional help and support to promote their emotional and psychological well-being. Medical consent has been obtained and staff are clear about what health decisions and responsibilities have been delegated to them.

Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with the families of young people, and with schools, social workers and other professional agencies, to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. Appropriate forms of contact are facilitated and promoted for young people. This ensures that they can sustain their close relationships with people who are most important to them. Consequently, young people maintain a sense of identity and of family belonging.

Young people are involved in key decisions; this enables them to influence and contribute to the running of the home. As a result, young people feel informed, valued and listened to, as they can see how their wishes, views and feelings have been sought and acted upon. One young person reported, 'It's an absolutely fantastic place. The staff are brilliant, amazing and professional. It's a smashing place. It's excellent.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Staff consistently place the safety of young people at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges this presents. They have a good understanding of their specific needs and vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them. Risks associated with young people are managed safely and effectively by staff. Young people are kept safe, and have a strong sense of personal safety.

Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm, including child sexual exploitation, intimidation and bullying. Staff are trained in child protection, and know how to deal with allegations and how to report suspected abuse. Allegations of abuse are managed professionally and appropriate safeguarding procedures are understood and followed by staff. This ensures that staff and young people are appropriately protected and supported. Significant incidents are reported to the appropriate authorities charged with a duty to protect young people. Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with the police and all other safeguarding agencies to

promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Young people rarely go missing; however, if they do, there are effective procedures and arrangements for securing their safe return. That said, since the last inspection, there has only been one occasion where a young person has gone missing. None of the young people who live at the home currently have gone missing since their admission. Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively. There have been no complaints since the last inspection and no complaints were raised by young people during the inspection.

Positive behaviour is consistently praised, encouraged and reinforced. Young people respond to the home's rules and boundaries in a receptive and positive way. They are respectful of staff and each other. Harmonious relationships within the home are fostered and encouraged. There have been no sanctions or restraints since the last inspection. There are no issues with young people engaging in unsafe, risk-taking behaviour. There are no concerns whatsoever about young people and self-harm, substance misuse, offending, going missing from care or anti-social behaviour.

One young person reported, 'Everyone is really nice. It's really good. When I first came my manners weren't so good, but they helped me with my manners. Like, saying please, thank you and excuse me. I've made progress in lots of ways.'

The accommodation provided for young people is physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, welcoming and homely. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively to ensure that a safe environment is maintained for staff, visitors and young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection. Staff fully meet the aims and objectives in the home's statement of purpose. They provide an effective, high-quality service for young people, and can demonstrate the positive impact and difference they have made to young people's lives. Staff maintain highly effective partnerships with young people's social workers, schools and families to ensure that young people's needs are met and that the care provided improves their outcomes.

The home benefits from a well-qualified, suitably trained and experienced registered manager who leads the staff by example and channels their efforts effectively. The registered manager ensures that the needs of young people are prioritised effectively, and that staff are well supported and professionally managed and led.

Staff benefit from regular professional supervision, and have their practice appraised. This ensures that they are able to reflect on their individual performance, and that their developmental and training needs are identified and met. Staff have access to high-quality training so that they can develop their skills and knowledge in order to meet the specific needs of young people. Staff have recently attended training in ligature management and working with individuals presenting with sexually harmful behaviour.

There are effective arrangements for monitoring the conduct of the home. An independent person visits the home on a regular basis to review the performance of the home and its arrangements for safeguarding young people and promoting their well-being. The registered manager undertakes her own internal monitoring activities. Combined, these are effective systems for ensuring that the home's strengths are understood and any weaknesses are identified, so that appropriate action can be taken to secure improvement. Consequently, there are good systems in place for reviewing and improving the quality of young people's care.

The registered manager monitors young people's progress against their plans and makes child-centred decisions. She escalates concerns and challenges professional decisions if she believes these decisions are not in the best interests of young people. She ensures that young people benefit from the best possible help, protection and all-round support. The manager is absolutely passionate about young people and she champions their needs effectively.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC025712

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Registered provider address: The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Responsible individual: Jill Sheldrake

Registered manager: Lillian Adamson

Inspector

Anthony Kyem: social care inspector

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