

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	14/09/2016
Unique reference number	SC025712
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	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

Inspection date	14/09/2016
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	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

SC025712

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people benefit from well-planned, highly personalised care that promotes their needs effectively and leads to change and improvement in their lives. They make good progress in relation to their starting points across all aspects of their welfare, and their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Young people benefit from effective support, help and protection. They become increasingly safe as a result of the actions staff take to support and protect them. Young people feel safe and have a strong sense of personal safety.
- Young people attend school regularly with good support and encouragement from staff. The home supports their learning and actively promotes their educational achievement. Young people enjoy and achieve as a result of the effective, high-quality support provided to them.
- The home maintains highly effective partnerships with schools, social workers and other professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support.
- Young people benefit from continuity of care and have stability and consistency in their lives. They enjoy good relationships with staff and benefit from positive role models whom they can look up to and learn from.
- Leaders and managers make good use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to improve the standard and quality of young people's care. They have a good understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses and take action to secure the home's improvement.

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 all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. This appraisal should take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and children in the home's care specifically. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- For children who are looked-after, including those placed in care under section 20 of the Children Act 1989, the placing authority will have recorded the level or type of family involvement that is appropriate in their care plan. This relates specifically to consideration of an independent visitor in the absence of any family contact. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.7)
- The use of external agency staff can be a positive choice to complement the skills and experiences of the permanent workforce. Any external agency staff should meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications and the registered person should consider their skills, qualifications and any induction necessary before agency staff commence work in the home. The use of agency staff should be carefully monitored. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 54, paragraph 10.16)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
02/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
09/10/2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The young person who lives at the home makes good progress in relation to their starting point across all aspects of their welfare, and their physical, social, emotional and behavioural development. They enjoy good relationships with staff and sustain their positive attachments. They benefit from continuity of care and have stability and consistency in their lives. The young person has developed a strong sense of permanence and belonging. There have been no placement breakdowns, disruptions or failures since the last inspection. The young person reported: 'I feel safe living here, of course. It's fun, not boring and it's enjoyable. Staff are good at their job. They're nice to be around and they're nice and not too strict.' The young person's social worker reported: 'He has been encouraged to make the home "his home" and this is evident on my visits.' The young person attends an alternative educational provision with good support and encouragement from staff. Staff play an active role in promoting the young person's education. They provide support with any homework, including helping the young person, if needed. They maintain effective partnerships with the young person's school to promote their regular school attendance and educational achievement. The young person's school reported: 'We have always found the home to be helpful and supportive. I am always particularly impressed with the importance they place on communication and keeping school informed. We work together closely so that all those working with the young person both at home and school are working along the same plans, ensuring a consistent approach to managing their behaviour. Our feeling at school is very much that staff are dedicated to improving outcomes for the young person and we feel that significant improvement has been made during his placement there.' Young people benefit from effective support to promote their good health. The young person is registered with a GP, dentist and optician and has access to the services when they need them. This includes access to specialist services, if needed, to promote their emotional and psychological well-being. Staff provide support with any health issues and encourage the young person to lead and maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. As a result, the young person is learning to take responsibility for their own health. For example, their personal care skills have improved considerably and they have grown in self-confidence as a result. Medical consent is in place and staff are clear about what healthcare decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them. A social worker reported: 'The placement has been supportive of the young person	

in all areas. This is evident in his appearance, social skills and within his education. The home is always welcoming and if there is a need to discuss any issues, they respond quickly.'

The home promotes contact for young people, wherever possible. However, the young person does not have any contact with his previous carers or family at this time. The home has approached the placing authority to request an independent visitor and this would enable the young person to have contact and develop a trusted relationship with an appropriate adult.

Staff involve the young person in decisions and act on their reasonable requests. The young person knows how to make a complaint and their entitlements are promoted effectively. The young person has access to an independent advocate to advise them and make representations on their behalf. There have been no complaints since the previous inspection.

The young person benefits from a broad range of positive and enjoyable activities, such as fishing, bike riding, scootering, camping, football and cooking. The young person is making friendships and developing their social skills, interests and hobbies. The young person reported: 'They help with my homework, reading and making friends. They encourage me to socialise more.'

Young people develop their practical skills in shopping, cleaning and cooking. The young person helps out and completes chores around the home. They are allowed to take controlled risks to promote their growth and natural development. The young person is working towards having unsupervised free time to promote their independence. The young person reported: 'It's ok. I like the fact that I can walk to the shop by myself. I'm working towards walking to school. We're taking it step by step. It's giving me independence.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practice. They understand the young person's specific needs and vulnerabilities and take appropriate action to address them. The use of clear risk assessment and effective behaviour management strategies promotes the safety and well-being of young people. Risks associated with the young person are well known and effectively managed by staff. Staff promote and encourage the young person's positive behaviour. They work in close partnership with their social worker and other professional agencies to ensure that the young person benefits from the right help and support. They monitor the young person's behaviour to identify potential triggers, patterns and trends. The	

use of new staff or agency workers is an identified trigger. The home has a vacant position and once filled, this would negate the need for the use of any agency staff.

Consequences for unacceptable behaviour are fair and the use of sanctions is kept to an absolute minimum. The use of restraint is exceptionally rare, and if used at all, it is only ever as a last resort to protect young people from harm. There have been no restraints used or episodes of the young person going missing from care since the last inspection. However, should the young person go missing, there are effective procedures and arrangements in place to promote their safe return.

Staff consistently apply the home's rules and boundaries to maintain good order and structure within the home. Restorative practice is helping the young person to think about the implications and consequences of their behaviour. Consequently, the young person is learning to self-regulate their own behaviour and staff support them in resolving conflicts more positively. The young person feels safe and has developed a strong sense of personal safety.

Young people are effectively protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Staff are trained in child protection and know how to deal with allegations and report suspected abuse. Significant incidents, including allegations of abuse, are reported to the appropriate authorities charged with a duty to protect young people. This ensures that young people are effectively safeguarded and supported.

The home provides young people with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively to promote a safe environment for young people. The home has a safe area report, which contains an analysis of the risks associated with the location of the home. Consequently, risks in the community are well known and understood by staff.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home benefits from a well-qualified, trained and suitably experienced registered manager who exercises strong and effective leadership of the home's operation. The manager is consistently ambitious and enthusiastic about the home's continuing improvement. She stimulates staff's enthusiasm and channels their efforts effectively. The home meets its aims and objectives, as set out in its statement of purpose. It can demonstrate and evidence the positive difference and impact it has made to	

lives of young people. The home has met and addressed all but one of the recommendations from the last inspection. The young person now has a professional advocate to support them and make representations on their behalf. Staff have involved the young person in their own care plan to enable the young person's contribution, knowledge and understanding of their plan.

Consent is in place for the independent person to scrutinise young people's case records. External monitoring visits are undertaken each month and reports now include the independent person's judgement as to the home's arrangements for effectively safeguarding young people. There is effective scrutiny of the home's performance that challenges the home's continuous improvement. The registered manager makes good use of the home's internal and external monitoring activities to improve the progress and experiences of young people.

Staff benefit from regular, professional supervision and appraisal. They work enthusiastically as a team and share and implement the home's ethos, approach and philosophy in caring for young people. Staff benefit from good-quality training to complement their existing skills and knowledge. The training needs of staff are effectively identified and met. The manager has devised a clear workforce development plan which promotes staff's personal and professional development. The manager plans to consult with, and involve young people in, staff appraisals which are yet to be completed. The completion of appraisals was the subject of a previous recommendation, consequently, the previous recommendation is repeated.

The needs of young people are effectively prioritised and met. Staff maintain effective partnerships with other professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. The manager monitors the progress young people make and makes child-centred decisions, acting in the best interests of young people. Young people benefit from a home that is managed efficiently and effectively.

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 the '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 children looked after 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 whom 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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