

## Children's homes inspection – Full

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| <b>Inspection date</b>             | <b>03/10/2016</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>     | <b>SC025713</b>                                                                   |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>          | <b>Full</b>                                                                       |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>           | <b>Children's home</b>                                                            |
| <b>Registered provider</b>         | <b>The Together Trust</b>                                                         |
| <b>Registered provider address</b> | <b>The Together Trust Centre,<br/>Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire<br/>SK8 1JE</b> |

|                               |                                    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Jill Sheldrake</b>              |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Amanda Self</b>                 |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Jo Hornby and Sarah Billett</b> |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>03/10/2016</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                    |

**SC025713**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people live in a warm, homely atmosphere where staff encourage them to personalise their environment. This helps them to settle quickly into the home and gain a sense of belonging.
- Staff listen to young people and support them to contribute to their care in key work sessions and young people's meetings. Clearer recording would demonstrate that young people are regularly consulted about their views.
- A shortfall noted at this inspection is that staff lack consistency in responding to young people who refuse to attend school. Clear strategies are needed to ensure that young people receive a clear, collective approach.
- Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of young people's risks and vulnerabilities and ensure that the right action is taken to keep young people safe from harm.
- The manager regularly identifies any potential risks to the home's location and strategies for managing these. The manager is keen to improve this further by evaluating the risks related to child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- Staff ensure that young people are safe. Good links are maintained with safeguarding agencies. This means that young people do not go missing from their home.

## **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 recommendations:

- Review the home's premises, including the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location in relation to child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and strategies for managing these. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 64, paragraph 15.1)
- Ensure that there are clear behaviour management strategies in place and that there is a consistent approach by all staff in following these plans. Expectations of standards of behaviour should be high for all staff and children in the home. These standards should be clear and unambiguous. Positive behaviour should be reinforced, praised and encouraged; poor behaviour should be challenged and discussed. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 39, paragraph 8.11)
- Ensure that consultation with young people regarding their plans and care is clearly recorded. Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The children's home is owned and operated by a voluntary organisation. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for two young people with behavioural and emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 17/02/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 10/11/2015      | Full            | Outstanding             |
| 11/02/2015      | Interim         | Improved effectiveness  |
| 18/09/2014      | Full            | Outstanding             |

## Inspection Judgements

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people live in a large family house, which is well decorated and feels warm and homely. A new kitchen has recently been fitted, and overall the home is well maintained. Staff at the home have used creative measures to improve relationships between the young people in the home using supported staff discussions and joint community activities, such as go-karting and attending 'break out' which is an escape room experience in the local area. This has led to more harmonious relationships between the young people in the home, which will enhance their overall experience of living in the home and provide a more harmonious living environment.</p> <p>Young people are supported and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. One young person has chosen his favourite colours to decorate his room. There are photographs and records of the young people's achievements displayed around the home, such as a certificate for participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This will assist young people to develop new skills, increasing their self-confidence and providing a sense of achievement.</p> <p>There has been one admission since the last inspection. The manager ensured that this admission was well planned and that the other young person in the unit had been prepared in advance of this. Young people are well prepared, learning a variety of skills such as cooking and budgeting. This means that young people increase in confidence and have the ability to manage various life skills when they leave the home. An independent reviewing officer commented that he thought the home had 'handled' transitions 'well' and commented that he felt the home had achieved 'the right balance between empowering and supporting the young people'.</p> <p>Staff make efforts to encourage young people to participate in their educational provision. They accompany young people where necessary and liaise with professionals such as the psychologist and virtual head. This has resulted in one young person making significant progress in education, attending further education and obtaining GCSEs. There is a lack of consistency regarding staff's response to young people who refuse to attend school. Robust plans and strategies need to be devised for staff to follow consistently to ensure that young people receive a clear, collaborative approach.</p> <p>All young people have individual health plans that are clear and thorough. Staff support young people to attend health appointments when necessary and encourage them to follow a healthy diet. This proactive approach has improved young people's health and increased self-esteem and confidence. Staff, in conjunction with health professionals, have supported one young person to refrain</p> |                 |

from smoking. This is already having a positive impact on his health and has motivated him to join a local boxing club. Staff are proactive in accessing support from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) if necessary and utilise the organisation's clinical service for young people who require this.

Young people make good progress from their individual starting points. Staff take time to get to know young people, discovering their interests and talents and support and encourage them to develop these. Young people make positive relationships within the community, attending the gym, broadening their social networks in the local area. This has been effective in preventing young people going missing from the home and there has been a decrease in destructive behaviour in the home. A social worker commented that she was 'really pleased' with the progress that a young person had made in the home.

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people are well protected because staff give young people's safety and well-being high priority. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping young people safe. Established systems are efficiently followed in response to any allegations, unsafe practice or suspicion of abuse.</p> <p>Staff have a good insight into young people's individual emotional needs and how these can be communicated through their behaviour. Staff spend time with young people so that they can reflect on their behaviour. Staff recognise the triggers to behaviour and are able to pre-empt situations which have the potential to cause a change in behaviour, developing plans with the young person to help manage these more successfully. Consequently, young people learn what safe and acceptable behaviour is, and make better choices to this effect. As a result, young people do not go missing and the use of physical restraint has not been necessary. A social worker said, 'X has not absconded once from this home. He regularly went missing at the previous placement.'</p> <p>Staff give young people's safety the highest priority. Individual risks are identified, understood and well managed. Interventions are supported by individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans. Staff are alert to indicators of risk and are able to recognise signs of child sexual exploitation. Staff take immediate action to protect young people by supporting them to engage in activities designed to discourage them from negative influences in their lives. They take a multi-agency approach, working with police, the placing authority and the home's authority to keep young people safe from harm.</p> |                 |

The home has developed highly effective links with specialist agencies in respect of risk assessment and young people. The manager regularly reviews the home's area risk assessment and identifies risks within the community and strategies for managing these. The manager is keen to develop this by evaluating the risks associated with radicalisation and child sexual exploitation within the home's locality. This improvement will provide staff with knowledge and understanding of the potential risks within the area and clear strategies to follow to ensure that young people are safeguarded.

Young people live in a safe environment. They and the staff are regularly involved in fire drills to ensure that they know how to evacuate the building safely in the event of a fire. Staff employed at the home are subject to organisational vetting procedures and do not start work in the home until all appropriate checks are complete. All fire, gas and electrical equipment are routinely serviced to ensure that they are in good working order. This ensures that the environment is safe and that young people are protected from persons who may present a risk to them.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>There has been a change in management since the last inspection. The current manager has submitted her application for registration with Ofsted. She has worked for another of the organisation's homes as registered manager for a number of years. She is suitably qualified and experienced in managing a staff team and brings with her a range of experience and knowledge to the home. The manager is child-focused and has good oversight of the running of the home.</p> <p>The manager has a comprehensive knowledge of the progress that young people make with regard to their individual plans. Care plans are detailed, address young people's individual needs and reflect their experiences. The manager and staff make every effort to support permanence, drive achievement and prepare young people for their future. The manager monitors and reviews the progress that young people make, assisting her to distinguish any developing patterns and trends. This means that she can quickly take action to address any areas of concern that are detected.</p> <p>The small staff team is competent in delivering good-quality care to young people and their families. Staff have a positive working relationship with their manager and receive regular supervision and appraisal, with emphasis on their professional development and the progress that the young people make. Staff development is ongoing through training and regular team meetings. Staff are either appropriately qualified or are working towards the required qualifications within timescales. Essential training is up to date and staff have accomplished training in relation to child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. This assists staff to identify risks and know what action to take to ensure that young people obtain the appropriate</p> |                 |



support in keeping them safe.

Staff are positive and are committed to supporting and encouraging young people to succeed in life. Staff want the very best for young people and work hard to help them prepare for their adult lives. A member of staff said, 'We want our young people to be happy, attend school and do well so that they are ready for independence.'

The home is well managed and effective in meeting the aims and objectives as outlined in its statement of purpose. Child-focused practice is rooted within the home's philosophy. Subsequently, young people are achieving positive outcomes in most aspects of their lives. A staff member said, 'From their admission, young people continue to make good progress.'

## 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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