

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	10/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC025713
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	The Together Trust
Registered person address	The Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 1JE

Responsible individual	Jill Sheldrake
Registered manager	Tracey Sheer
Inspector	Louise Redfern

Inspection date	10/11/2015
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC025713

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- Staff are skilled at providing a nurturing environment in which young people are thriving and making exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives.
- The whole staff team are passionate about securing positive outcomes for the young people living at the home. They effectively advocate for young people with the local authority to ensure young people's views are heard and listened to.
- The staff team regularly go above and beyond their role, as a result young people build exceptional relationships with individual staff members. This is because young people recognise that the staff team are there to support and care for them.
- Young people are very well supported to maintain family relationships. Family members are welcomed into the home and regular contact is facilitated; staff members pick up individual family members to ensure contact is maintained. Young people are also encouraged and supported to celebrate important family events and anniversaries.
- Young people are steadily working towards independence by learning and putting life skills into practice. This learning process will prepare them for moving on and enhance their life chances when living independently. This is because they have had the opportunity to practice and learn from their experiences in a safe and nurturing environment.
- The management team are passionate about providing high quality care and strive for continuous improvement in the home. They work in a consistent way to secure positive outcomes for the young people.
- The staff team say they are well supported in their role by the management team and have regular supervision and team meetings. They participate in both regular and specific training. This ensures they are well equipped to meet the individual needs of the young people placed in the home.
- Young people live in a house that they say they 'feel safe and comfortable in and that it's just my home.'

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

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must ensure they: (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home, this specifically relates to the use of development plans.	18/12/2015
ensure that the registered person establishes a system which evaluates the quality of care provided for children. (Regulation 45 (2))	18/12/2015

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
11/02/2015	CH - Interim	improved effectiveness
18/09/2014	CH - Full	Outstanding
25/02/2014	CH - Interim	Good Progress
25/09/2013	CH - Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Young people benefit from living in a home which provides an exceptional level of individualised care. This has resulted in them making sustained progress in all areas of their lives given their individual starting points. In particular they have maintained excellent attendance levels in education and made significant progress in their educational attainment levels. They both comment that they are enjoying school and college. The whole staff team support progress in education and have built very good relationships with the education providers. One education professional commented: 'the staff team are really supportive we work together on any issues that come up, X is doing really well educationally.' Young people enjoy participating in regular physical activities in the local community, which improves their physical health, builds self-esteem and establishes links to the local community. Although young people engage in positive activities in the community they also choose to spend time in the house with the staff team and each other. Young people's views are central to the running of the home and they have a substantial say in the running of the home; through day to day discussions, individual sessions and their take away meetings. They are also invited to and do attend some team meetings. One young person has also attended training days with the staff team, this not only builds relationships but also prepares them for moving on from the home. Individual staff members have built exceptional relationships with both young people. Relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. Young people have one to one support, consequently they spend quality time with individual staff members. Young people say: 'its outstanding here, the staff really care about us. They do things for us because they care. It's not just a job to them.' Since living at the home the young people, who are siblings, have made significant progress in developing and maintaining their relationship with each other and their extended family. This means that they have maintained solid family relationships in preparation for moving into adulthood. At the same time the staff team have supported them to develop their own individual identities and interests. Young people have professional photographs taken annually with their younger sibling, these are proudly hung on the walls of the home, along with other family photographs and photographs of the young people with the staff team on activities. This contributes to the homely feel of the house and the young people's	

sense of belonging.

Both young people are preparing for their move on from the home into adulthood and have made significant progress in developing their individual skills. The staff team are imaginative in preparing young people at a pace which suits them as individuals. This means for one young person they have built the confidence to travel to college on public transport and they are learning to budget their own allowance, which is paid directly into their bank account. This means young people can learn and practice their skills in a safe setting and know support and guidance is still available, should they need it.

Young people live in a well maintained and homely environment, they are involved in choosing the décor of the home and have recently been involved in the planning and design of a new kitchen, which is due to be installed.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
Young people's safety is given the highest priority by the whole staff team. Young people benefit from high staffing ratios which ensure they receive the support and care they need. Young people have demonstrated that they are becoming increasingly skilled at recognising when they need extra support and when they can manage situations independently. They have successfully demonstrated that they can recognise when peer relationships are impacting on their emotional well-being. Resulting in them having the confidence to step away and put their own safety first. Young people are extremely positive about the care they receive and say they feel very safe living at the home. They say that they can talk to the staff about anything. One young person commented 'they are not just here for the job, they really care about us and want us to be safe.' Young people's behaviour is sensitively and effectively managed. This is because the whole staff team know the young people very well and work consistently and meticulously in line with the agreed individual plans and incentives. Young people put a high value on having the consistent staff team and feel safe work with the same team members. Staff make excellent use of the behaviour management training, including the use of physical restraint, supports the very low numbers of significant incidents, physical restraint and sanctions. On the rare occasions sanctions are imposed the Registered Manager now ensures each sanction is evaluated for effectiveness.	

Staff give young people's safety the highest priority; they receive regular training and discuss in detail any emerging risks at team meetings and daily handovers. This means action can be taken to support young people without delay.

There are excellent safeguarding procedures in place for staff to follow in the event of any allegations, suspicion of abuse or unsafe practice. The local authority designated officer confirms that the organisation is transparent and concerns are reported appropriately.

Young people remain very settled in the home. There have been three isolated episodes of missing from home since the last inspection. Detailed and robust risk assessments and effective links with the local police, ensured the safe and swift return of the young person. Following these episodes every member of the staff team spoke with the young person, to offer support and an opportunity to share their concerns around emerging risk taking behaviour. This robust and proactive approach underlined to the young person the dangers associated with going missing and as a result there have been no further episodes.

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice in the home supports young people to feel safe in the home; significantly increasing their confidence in their own ability to manage different life experiences in the community. Consequently they have developed skills to travel safely to and from college, which involves a number of transport changes from buses to trains. They have been able to achieve this because of the strong sense of safety they have developed living at the home.

Robust staff recruitment, selection procedures and appropriate checks and monitoring of visitors while on site help as far as possible to protect young people from unsuitable adults in the home.

Young people live in a physically safe environment. They are well protected by a thorough range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments, routine checks and regular fire drills and scenarios; none of these impact on the homely feel of the home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The home is managed by a suitably qualified and experienced manager. She has had a recent period of absence. However, the organisation has informed Ofsted and taken steps to ensure the leadership and management of the home has remained consistent. The management arrangements have been further strengthened by an experienced Registered Manager temporarily being seconded	

to the home in the interim period to provide experienced leadership oversight.

The manager and staff team have very high aspirations for the young people living at the home, they prioritise their individual needs. All the staff team understand and know them as individuals, but also actively encourage their sibling relationship with each other. The management team have challenged the placing authority on behalf of the young people to ensure their wishes and feeling have been heard. This has empowered the young people to pursue their own action with the placing authority around planning for their futures.

The quality of the relationships between the staff and managers of the home and external professionals are very good, consequently the best possible support is available for the young people. One professional commented: 'the staff are very vocal around supporting the boys, they are passionate about wanting the best for them.'

The small and dedicated staff team have remained consistent since the last inspection. They say they feel well supported in their role through supervisions, team meetings, peer to peer support and the established comprehensive training programme. The management team have been imaginative around the training programme, sourcing bespoke training days to support the staff to meet the specific needs of individual young people. As a result staff members are motivated and equipped to build and sustain relationships with young people and meet their individual needs. This means they continue to make progress in all aspects of their lives.

The home is well resourced and delivers the services and support outlined in the Statement of Purpose. Regular monitoring of the home is effective which secures improvement when weaknesses are identified. However the manager monitoring report lacks evaluation of the service. This constitutes a missed opportunity to drive forward improvement. Also the manager has not yet implemented a development plan for the home. Despite this young people continue to make significant progress in the home, and both staff and young people talk about the plans for the home and scheduled improvements to the house.

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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