

SC025713

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 for two young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities. The home is run and managed by a voluntary organisation.

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 January 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 continuity of care, and have stability and consistency in their lives. Young people enjoy good relationships with staff, with whom they develop and sustain positive attachments.
- Staff are positive role models for young people. Young people benefit from the

presence of appropriate adults they look up to and learn from. They benefit from effective, high quality support from staff who contribute 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 enjoy living at the home. They are kept safe, and feel a strong sense of personal safety. They benefit from well planned, highly personalised care that promotes their needs effectively.
- Care practice is highly individualised to meet the needs of both young people. Risks associated with young people are well known and understood by staff. Staff have a good understanding of young people's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them.
- The home maintains highly effective partnerships with social workers, schools and other professional agencies to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. Young people benefit from positive experiences, and attend school regularly with good support and encouragement from staff.
- Young people benefit from a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment. Staff involve young people in key decisions, and young people feel able to influence and contribute to the running of their home.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Young people require updated education, health and care plans to promote and meet their specific needs.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/01/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/10/2016	Full	Good
17/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that all relevant plans are obtained from the placing authority. This relates specifically to obtaining copies of the Education, health and care Plan. ('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

Young people's transitions are managed effectively in a well-planned, controlled and positive way. Young people who have left the home since the last inspection have either returned home to live with their own family or made the successful transition to semi-independent living. Both young people placed at the home are appropriately placed and matched. A social worker reports:

'The young person's admission to the home went well, although there was only a brief period of introduction. Staff supported the plan of transition and worked closely with the young person's carer and social worker to make this as smooth as possible. Staff were extremely empathetic with the young person during his move. They were mindful of the fact that he had a limited period of time to adjust to the fact that his foster placement had come to an end. I have found the staff extremely professional. They are very insightful with regard to his presenting behaviours and how his life experiences continue to impact on his current behaviours.'

Young people 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 continuity of care, and consistency and stability in their lives.

Staff encourage and support positive and harmonious relationships in the home. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff, and with each other. They benefit from positive role models in the form of staff they look up to and learn from. Young people report, 'I think it's nice. The staff are nice and supportive. They listen and if I have a problem they help sort it out.'

Staff provide young people with positive activities, both at home and in the wider community. However, some young people are more willing to participate in the home's activities than others. Consequently, young people's experiences are varied. For example, one young person said, 'Staff are nice and they take me to the park. I go bike riding and bowling and I'm getting good at it.' However, another young person reported,

'I don't do many activities to be honest but that's my choice.' Both young people have weekly planners where they can choose their own specific activities with staff. They recently enjoyed a holiday, and staff try their best to engage young people in new activities to promote their interests and hobbies.

Young people are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians, and staff ensure that they have access to these services, when they need them. This access includes any specialist help and support they may need to promote their physical and emotional well-being. Young people benefit from this support and enjoy good health. Medical consent is obtained so that staff are clear about what types of health decisions and responsibilities are delegated to them.

Staff consistently have high aspirations for young people. They work proactively and productively with schools to promote young people's educational attainment and achievement. Young people attend school regularly and make good progress in their learning, taking into account their individual starting points. However, young people do not have copies of their education, health and care plans, to promote their specific needs and ensure that they receive the right levels of help and support.

An email from the local education coordinator addressed to the registered manager states:

'I just wanted to email yourself and your colleagues to express my thanks for all your support. Your support has been invaluable...We have watched him evolve into a confident and sociable young man and the continual communication from both yourself and your team has been instrumental both to celebrate his achievements and also swiftly deal with any issues that arose which were speedily picked up to ensure he was progressing and achieving.'

Staff promote contact to ensure that young people can sustain their close relationships with the people who are most important to them. Key staff maintain effective partnerships with social workers, schools, families and carers to ensure that young people benefit from the best possible help and all-round support.

Staff ensure that young people are consulted on key decisions. They listen to young people and act on their reasonable requests. As a result, young people feel valued and included, and able to influence and contribute to the running of their home. Young people know how to make a complaint and their rights are promoted effectively.

Young people report, 'Staff are kind, joyful and wicked. The house is nice, comfortable and it's lovely. My key worker, she's wicked and very funny...They are very kind people and it doesn't feel like a children's home. I take part in lots of fun activities. The staff are very supportive. I like them all but find some easier to talk to than others. Staff help me when I'm upset.'

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

Staff consistently place young people's safety at the centre of their practice, irrespective of the challenges this presents. They have a good understanding of each individual's specific needs and vulnerabilities, and take appropriate action to address them. Young people are kept safe and feel safe living at their home.

Young people have not gone missing since their admission. However, should young people go missing, there are effective procedures and arrangements in place for staff to follow to secure their quick and safe return. The use of clear risk assessment and effective safe working practice ensure that young people are protected and kept safe from harm. Young people benefit from effective support, help and protection.

Staff are trained in child protection and know how to deal with allegations, and are aware of reporting procedures for suspected abuse. Young people are protected from abuse and all other forms of significant harm. Since the last inspection, there have been no allegations of abuse or referrals to children and young people's services. The home maintains highly effective partnerships with the police, social workers and all other safeguarding agencies to promote the safety and well-being of young people.

Staff actively encourage and support young people's positive behaviour. They develop exceptionally good relationships with the young people, and this provides the foundation for managing their behaviour. They help young people to express themselves safely so that they learn to control their strong emotions, and can self-regulate and manage their feelings and behaviour. This has proved successful, with the use of restraint kept to an absolute minimum. Restraint is always a last resort and, if used at all, it is only ever used to protect young people from harm.

Consequences for negative behaviour are proportionate and fair. When used, sanctions are also restorative in nature. Serious incidents are rare, but when they do occur they are reported to the appropriate authorities that are charged with a duty to protect young people. This ensures that the right action is taken by the right professionals, to support and protect young people. Health and safety matters are addressed effectively. The home provides young people with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed efficiently and effectively by a very experienced registered manager and deputy who exercise strong and effective leadership of the operation of the home. They ensure that staff are well supported, managed and led, and that the needs of young people are prioritised effectively. They ensure that staff meet the aims and objectives, as set out in the home's statement of purpose, by delivering a good, high-quality service for young people that contributes to change and improvement in their lives. The home can demonstrate the positive impact and difference it has made to

the lives of individual young people.

The performance of the home is scrutinised effectively by an independent person who visits the home on a monthly basis to evaluate the standard and quality of young people's care, and the home's arrangements to safeguard them and promote their well-being. The independent person makes an impartial and professional judgement about the quality of young people's care, and prepares a written report on the performance and conduct of the home. This enables staff, leaders and managers to understand the strengths and any weaknesses of the home. The registered manager makes good use of the home's external and internal monitoring activities to tackle any identified shortfalls or weaknesses, to secure the home's improvement.

The manager is not afraid to challenge professional decision making, if she believes those decisions are not in the best interests of young people. She escalates concerns and works closely with all professionals and appropriate authorities to ensure that young people's entitlements are met, and that they benefit from the best possible help and all-round support. This ensures that the needs of young people are championed effectively, and that professional partnerships support their progress and placement success.

Staff benefit from appraisal of their practice. They benefit from regular, professional, high-quality supervision, and records are held to evidence that this is the case. All staff have completed their mandatory training, and their individual training needs are identified and met. They are knowledgeable, skilled and appropriately trained to meet the specific needs of the young people they provide care for. Most staff are appropriately qualified, and a number of staff are trained in attachment. There are plans in place for the whole staff team to be trained in a practice model based on attachment, to enhance their consistency of care, and to promote even better outcomes for young people. This is work in progress.

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.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC025713

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: Amanda Self

Inspector

Anthony Kyem, social care regulatory inspector

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