

SC025744

Registered provider: The Together Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is one of a number of homes operated by an independent organisation. It provides care and accommodation for six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 December 2018

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 23 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
23/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Good
03/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

- All children's case records must be kept up to date ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 32, paragraph 14.3). In particular, staff should ensure that placement plans consistently reflect the current support being provided to young people to meet their needs.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection, there have been no new admissions or discharges. This means that the home has experienced a period of stability. The majority of the young people have lived at the home for several years. As a result, young people have developed strong relationships with staff and each other. The sense of family is strong in this home.

Young people talked with pride about the caring and kind staff that look after them. A young person told the inspector, 'I have a really good relationship with staff. They have supported me, and they are really good to talk to. This is easily one of the best homes.'

Young people show a real maturity in highlighting the many ways in which staff have helped and supported them. One young person told the inspector about the transformational changes that she has made while living at the home. The young person discussed that at the start of her placement she misused drugs and did not attend school. The young person is now attending school and aspires to be a teacher. Young people learn to believe in themselves and have the opportunities to achieve goals, which may have otherwise been unattainable.

An independent reviewing officer told the inspector, 'The staff have been very nurturing. I think that staff have gone above, beyond and put themselves out for [the young person]. A social worker said that the home is 'absolutely fantastic'. The high praise from these professionals reflects the significant progress that young people are making in all aspects of their lives. Considering their starting points, young people progress educationally, emotionally and behaviourally and thrive in placement.

Young people lead fun and active lives. For example, young people attend horse riding and dance classes. This provides young people with the chance to learn new skills, develop friendships and grow in confidence. These activities are further enhanced through young people's involvement in charitable events. The opportunity to help others is an empowering experience for young people.

Young people's need for staff to advocate on their behalf has reduced. This is because in many cases young people's self-esteem has grown so much that they now feel able to speak up for themselves. Young people are developing the skills they will need for adulthood.

In some isolated instances, placement plans do not fully reflect the highly personalised care currently being provided for young people. This has no impact on the quality of care provided and is a small area for improvement.

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

Staff's knowledge of young people means that they are in tune with the needs of young people and are able to take proactive steps to support them. One member of staff commented that she only needs to see how one young person walks up the driveway, to know how best to support him. As a result, physical intervention is rarely needed, and there have been only two restraints in the last 14 months. This is a remarkable achievement, considering young people's past behaviours.

Staff work hard to support young people to recognise the physiological signs associated with their feelings of anxiety and stress. For one young person, this has been a significant break-through in enabling him to develop his emotional resilience.

Staff support young people to develop a range of strategies to be able to better manage their own behaviours. For example, the use of sensory toys helps some young people to stay calm when they may have previously assaulted staff or caused damage in the home. The progress that young people have made is excellent.

Young people told the inspector that they like the fact that staff put in place clear rules and boundaries. This helps young people to feel safe. Equally, young people recognise that, when they do make a mistake, staff are fair in responding to such situations. This helps young people to learn from such situations. Young people are developing the skills they will need in the future.

Staff have a detailed knowledge of young people's vulnerabilities. Staff take the necessary steps to keep young people safe. This means that young people who have previously presented as being at high risk of exploitation no longer present as being at direct risk. Young people become increasingly safe as a result of the care provided by staff.

Young people's sense of belonging and increased maturity mean that the frequency of missing incidents is low. This is a significant change for some young people. A young person told the inspector that, if she is late home, she knows that staff will ring her friends and family to locate her. This acts as a motivator for her to return at the agreed time and shows the young person that staff care about her.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The experienced registered manager leads a highly skilled and competent staff team that places young people at the centre of everything it does.

The stability of the staff team is a key factor in the success of this home. Staff who work at this home enjoy their work and recognise the positive impact that they have on young people's lives. The positive care environment contributes significantly to the progress and achievements made by all young people.

The staff team is knowledgeable and skilled. A continuously developing training programme provides the opportunity for staff to undertake a range of evidence-based training courses. This means that staff have a toolkit of approaches from which to draw, in order to best support young people.

A strong research base informs staff's effective care planning for young people. This is further enhanced by the input from the home's own clinical psychologist. This ensures that staff are able to develop highly personalised plans to meet the holistic needs of young people.

The staff team proactively works with a range of partner agencies. Good communication is at the heart of this. The registered manager also seeks out every opportunity to learn about new resources in the area and to develop links with services. This benefits young people, as staff are able to quickly implement specialist input as the need arises.

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: SC025744

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: Stephen Truelove

Inspector

Paul Robinson, social care inspector

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