

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 a voluntary organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

The home is led by an experienced registered manager who has been in post for a number of years.

Inspection dates: 24 to 25 April 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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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: 12 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2018	Full	Outstanding
23/10/2017	Full	Outstanding
16/01/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/06/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Since the last inspection in December 2018, there have been no new admissions to the home. One young person has been discharged. Although this was not a planned move, the staff supported the young person to move on in a positive manner under difficult circumstances.

The remaining young people have lived at the home for a number of years. They have established strong and trusting relationships with staff and have a real sense of belonging. The home has a stable and experienced staff team. This contributes to the provision of excellent relationships between young people and the adults caring for them. One young person told the inspector that her key worker had been the same person since she arrived at the home a number of years ago. She had found this very positive. She said: 'This feels like home. The house is really settled.'

The stability of the staff team promotes excellent outcomes for young people. Staff know young people well and understand their needs. This means that staff provide highly effective care that is individualised to each young person and supports them to reach their potential.

Young people make excellent progress from their starting points. They grow in confidence and have high aspirations for their future. This is testament to the quality of care that they experience in the home, which means that young people thrive in this environment. A headteacher told the inspector: 'The home goes above and beyond. Staff obviously care very much.' A social worker said: 'They really advocate on my young person's behalf. They know her very well. They have a real commitment to her.'

Young people are encouraged to pursue their interests outside of the home. One young person has recently gained a distinction in her dance class. The support from staff enables young people to feel part of the community and to celebrate their achievements.

Those young people who are moving towards independence are supported to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to equip them to make a successful transition into adult life. This is done in a well-planned manner in partnership with the young person and at their own pace. Young people say that they feel well supported by staff to take the next steps in their lives.

In some isolated instances, risk assessments and placement plans are written using language which is not child friendly. This makes it more difficult for the young people involved to contribute to their care planning.

Young people are receiving specialist services where this is needed. The home has excellent relationships with agencies that are working to reduce risk around the exploitation of young people. Targeted services for young people who have been affected by sexually harmful behaviours work closely and successfully with the home. This means that young people develop emotional resilience and the skills to grow as individuals.

School attendance and engagement with education are generally good and this is encouraged by the home. One young person in their final year of education has the usual decreasing timetable; however, not all of the resulting unstructured time is being utilised to promote further learning or development.

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

Staff at the home have a really good understanding of how to keep young people safe. Staff take a robust multi-agency approach to reduce any emerging concerns that may undermine young people's welfare or safety. There are strong and well-established links with other professionals to ensure that young people receive timely support and advice regarding any risk-taking behaviour.

Young people that are working towards independent living have an appropriate level of freedom to develop the skills that they need to move on. This is balanced with good support and oversight from staff. These plans are agreed in consultation with young people and the pace of transition is appropriate.

Staff create a good balance between managing young people's growing sense of independence and appropriate age-related restrictions. As a result, young people develop the skills that they need to take increasing responsibility for their personal safety.

The challenges that young people can present are managed well by the staff. As a result, the use of physical intervention is rare. Alternatively, an educative and restorative approach is used well to address incidents, with high levels of success. The use of negative sanctions is minimal, and this promotes a positive home environment for young people which helps them feel valued and secure.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is led by an experienced registered manager who has been in post for a number of years. He knows the home well and is committed to doing the very best for the young people in his care.

The manager is supported by a suitably qualified and stable staff team. One new member of staff has joined the home since the last inspection. He is an experienced residential care worker who has added to the existing skills and knowledge of the staff group. One member of staff told the inspectors: 'I am proud to work in this home. We have a great support system and staff team.'

The current training plan is not up to date and does not provide accurate information about training undertaken. Few staff have received formal training in the PACE practice model which is linked to nurturing and attachment, that is described in the home's statement of purpose. Staff need to complete this training so that they have the skills and knowledge to care for young people within the home's stated framework.

The quality of care experienced by young people is regularly reviewed by the manager. This information is shared with the wider staff team in team meetings as well as individual supervision. This ensures that all team members are fully prepared to meet

the individual needs of young people.

Recruitment of staff is safe and ensures that young people are not exposed to risks to their safety and welfare.

The manager is aware that a key strength of the home is the stability it currently offers. He gives careful consideration to the matching of new admissions with the needs of the current young people living at the home. Admissions are well planned, and full information is gained and reviewed before agreement is made to admit young people. Priority is given to maintaining the quality of care to the young people currently at the home. This means that young people thrive in a settled and caring home environment.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child. (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(c)) Specifically, that all staff are trained in the home's model of PACE, nurturing and attachment, practice.	31 October 2019

Recommendations

- Each child should be supported to sustain or regain their confidence in education and be engaged in suitable structured activities. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28 paragraph 5.15)
- The registered person should ensure that they and their staff engage proactively with the young person and their placing authority to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the young person's care on an ongoing basis. ('Guide to the

children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.3) Specifically, in relation to ensuring that risk assessments and placement plans are consistently written in a manner which is child focused.

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

Inspectors

Dawn Parton, social care inspector

Pauline Yates, social care inspector

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