

SC025747

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 to provide care and accommodation for up to three young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is run and managed by a voluntary organisation.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 December 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: 22 February 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 live in a caring and supportive home that makes a positive difference to their lives. As a result, young people make sustained progress across all aspects of their development.
- The manager and staff team develop good relationships with young people that

consistently place young people at the centre of their practice.

- Staff have a very good understanding of young people's behaviour and risks. They work cohesively with a range of agencies to develop well thought-out strategies.
- The home is led by a manager and deputy manager who are hands-on and lead by example. This promotes consistency for staff and young people and enables the management team to develop and nurture new staff members to ensure that they promote the aims and objectives of the home.
- Parents and professionals are complimentary about the level of care and support that young people receive and the levels of communication between the home and themselves.

The children's home's areas for development:

- The manager does not ensure that team meetings take place regularly, affording the staff team opportunities to discuss together the individual progress of the young people and the development of the home.
- The independent visitor does not consistently ensure that they seek the views of parents, young people and staff members about the home; this is a missed opportunity for the provider to drive improvement in the service.
- The manager has not ensured that the safeguarding policy is adhered to on one occasion in relation to the reporting of allegations to external agencies.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
22/02/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/10/2016	Full	Good
29/03/2016	Interim	Not judged
17/03/2016	Interim	Not judged

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
13 (1) The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— (b) ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate. (Regulation 13 (2) (b)) With particular reference to holding regular team meetings.	31/01/2018
When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help the independent person— (a) if they consent, to interview in private such of the children, their parents, relatives and persons working at the home as the independent person requires. (Regulation 44 (2)(a))	31/01/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person should notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40 occurs. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.10)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people at this home have positive placement outcomes. The one young person who has moved out of the home since the last inspection has returned home in line with their care plan and wishes. The manager takes great care in placement matching to the home; detailed impact risk assessments are carried out and face-to-face meetings with potential new young people are completed to further assess if the placements will be a match to the home. This promotes stability of placements, not only for those young people already in placement, but also new admissions to the home.

Young people admitted to the home settle quickly and develop positive relationships with staff. Young people spoken to during the inspection spoke highly of the staff, saying that

they were alright and that they could speak to anyone about anything. Observation during the inspection of interaction between staff and young people showed lots of emotional warmth, humour, positive support and encouragement. Parents and professionals are also positive about the care and support that young people receive. They commented that young people continue to make noticeable progress in their social and emotional well-being.

Key working is embedded in the home; staff new to the role are supported by the manager and colleagues to develop the skills to be a good key worker. Young people know their key workers and engage in individual sessions. Young people are encouraged and supported to follow their own hobbies and interests. Staff support them to try new things and get involved at their own pace, while maintaining a clear oversight of levels of risk associated with the activities, in line with the individual risk management plans. Consequently, young people feel listened to because they have a number of opportunities to express their views, including their key-working sessions, young people's meetings, day-to-day interactions and the organisation's children's council. Young people's meetings are successfully used as a forum to educate young people in a range of areas.

Education is very well supported and promoted within the home. Both young people have excellent attendance at school and are reported to have made good progress since living at the home. One educational professional commented: 'He is switched on and focused on learning. His attendance is now at 98.2%.' Another educational professional said: 'I can't fault the home; they are hugely supportive of [young person's name]. He has definitely been on a journey, but now he is on 99% attendance. The manager and staff always support school activities, such as parents' evening and school assemblies. The manager will definitely challenge on behalf of [name of the young person] if it's required.'

Young people are helped to achieve good health. They are registered with services and are supported to attend individual appointments. Some young people are also supported to attend specific external therapy sessions; the manager has commissioned training from this service to ensure that the whole staff team are aware of the model of therapy used by this service and to gain an understanding around some of the behaviour displayed by individual young people.

Young people's contact with family and friends is, where appropriate, promoted by the staff team, in line with individual risk management plans. A parent spoken to during the inspection spoke positively about the home and the care her son receives. She said, 'I am really happy with everything, it's a really good home. My son is happy here and has good routines and choices.'

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

The manager and staff have a good awareness of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. All staff attend safeguarding training and receive regular refresher training. Consequently, staff understand how to identify and respond to all safeguarding

concerns or allegations. However, on one occasion the manager has completed an internal investigation of an allegation but failed to inform the designated officer or Ofsted. This has not impacted on the safety of the young people as the investigation was completed appropriately. The designated officer commented: 'We have a good professional relationship; the manager is very transparent and is good at talking through concerns.'

Due to the identified safeguarding risks of young people, staff provide a high level of support and close supervision. This promotes young people's safety and well-being. Young people themselves say that they feel very safe living at the home.

There have been two incidents of going missing since the last inspection; these involved the late return of the young person after independence time away from the home. These incidents were well managed, recorded and reviewed by the manager. This ensures that young people are supported to understand the risks associated with being missing from the home and the importance of following their individual risk management plans.

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's risks. They manage all behaviours well. Clear and consistent boundaries help young people to feel safe and secure. Staff have a good understanding of each young person's individual needs. They are aware of the triggers that create anxiety for young people. Staff remain calm and support young people to de-escalate situations in a safe way. Clear behaviour management plans support staff in using physical intervention. However, there has only been one physical intervention since the last inspection. Staff keep detailed records of all incidents and the manager has a clear overview. She is able to identify any emerging triggers and trends for young people. This means that practice and routines can be adjusted to positively support individual young people to positively manage their own behaviour.

Young people live in a safe environment. Their safety is further enhanced by safer recruitment practices in the home. Staff complete detailed risk assessments and regularly update them. They also ensure that all fire, electrical and gas appliances are checked for safety. Young people know how to respond should an emergency happen. This ensures that the home is safe, and that young people's physical safety and well-being are promoted. The manager has recently implemented an evacuation plan for the home, should staff and young people be unable to return to the home. This prepares staff to be ready to manage the safe placement of young people away from the home in an emergency.

Staff have recently undertaken online training around radicalisation. They have shared their learning with young people in individual key-work sessions. This promotes learning and understanding for all and ensures that young people are supported to understand the risks around radicalisation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A qualified and experienced manager manages the home. She registered with Ofsted in August 2016 for this home, but has a number of years' experience as a registered manager within the organisation. The manager is also registered for another children's home in the locality. She is supported to manage both these homes by an experienced and qualified deputy manager. The manager continues to show commitment to her ongoing professional development, participating in regular training.

The manager closely monitors the quality of care practice within the home. She places the young people at the centre of the home and regularly considers feedback from young people, their families and professionals. This promotes ongoing development within the home. The manager has an understanding of the home's strengths and areas for development. She uses both internal and external monitoring systems well to identify the progress that young people make. Monthly visits are undertaken by an independent person. However, the visitor does not ensure that feedback from young people, their relatives and staff is regularly sought. This does not support the manager to further drive improvement.

The manager appropriately challenges other services where required; for example, she has consistently challenged the risk management of one young person in the school setting. This ensures that the young person's individual risks are identified and that he and others around him are safeguarded effectively.

The statement of purpose provides a clear vision for the home. Ofsted is regularly updated when revisions to the statement of purpose are made. Staff report that they feel well supported and enjoy working in the home. All staff have had an appraisal and receive supervision in line with the organisation's policies. This supports individual staff and provides an opportunity for them to reflect on their practice and drives improvement in the care of young people. However, the manager has not ensured that the team meets together on a regular basis. This means that the team is not afforded the opportunity to discuss practice together and share experiences of working with the individual young people. This has not significantly impacted on practice as staff do have thorough handovers and regular supervision with managers.

The manager has a good system in place to monitor staff training, which means that staff training is kept up to date. Staff say that they benefit from regular training, which is wide-ranging, in order to meet the individual needs of young people. One new member of staff commented: 'I was really impressed that I was able to complete training even before I had started in the job. This meant I was really prepared for the role.' Most staff either have the required childcare qualification or are working towards the qualification.

The management team promotes equality and diversity within the home. Staff try to use current topics to educate young people about equality and diversity issues. Young people are appropriately challenged as required by staff members to ensure that they are tolerant of each other and others outside the home.

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: SC025747

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: Lillian Adamson

Inspector

Louise Redfern, social care inspector

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