

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025747
Inspector	Mark Kersh
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 Marie Bernadette Sheldrake
Registered manager	Louise Blyth
Date of last inspection	10/03/2014

Inspection date	06/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	None.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people achieve good outcomes in all areas of their development because of the wide range of opportunities available to them. From their starting points, young people make steady and sustained progress in areas including their physical and emotional health, education and learning, and moving onto adulthood. The management and staff team can describe the outcomes young people achieve. However, there are occasions where evidence of individual outcomes is not routinely captured within care planning documents. As a result not all records show the impact the home is having on young people's lives.

Stakeholders and families confirm they are regularly consulted and pleased with the care the home provides, and comment positively on young people's development. Staff have warm relationships with young people and observations during the inspection demonstrated that expectations and boundaries are accepted and adhered to by young people. Young people feel they are listened to and that staff act promptly on their requests.

Young people feel safe in this home and staff are trained to protect them. There is good liaison between the home and those agencies charged with the protection of young people. Individual age-appropriate risk assessments are in place and allow for controlled risks to be taken by young people while out in the community or visiting

friends. Strategies are in place to secure the safety of young people and a quick response by staff should any concerns arise.

The Registered Manager has and continues to take action to secure improvement. The home has been fully re-decorated and external work to the front and rear garden areas has been completed. There are, however, some recommendations made for further improvement in leadership and management outcomes such as delegating tasks and having clear lines of management accountability. Some of the young people's records are not specific in relation to the outcomes young people achieve and the children's guide needs to include the contact details for Ofsted.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home run by a charitable organisation. It provides care and accommodation for up to three young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2014	Interim	good progress
08/01/2014	Full	good
04/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
01/08/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	produce a guide to the children's home which shall include the address and telephone number of HMCI. (Regulation 4(3)(c))	29/08/2014

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the home contributes effectively to each child's placement plan, specifically in relation to outcomes, to monitor and show progress (NMS 25.3)

- ensure managers and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and that the level of delegation and responsibility of the manager and staff, and the lines of accountability, are clearly defined. (NMS 21.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people achieve positive outcomes within a caring and supportive environment. They have their individual needs met by staff who have an understanding and knowledge which enables them to provide tailored responses to young people. Young people grow in confidence because they are treated with respect; they are encouraged to express their wishes, views and feelings and receive positive recognition for their achievements. Therefore young people develop a positive self-view.

Young people's health needs are met and they live a healthy lifestyle. Activities are varied, which gives them lots of opportunities for new, fun experiences. Young people can choose how they spend their leisure time and their wishes and aspirations are fully appreciated. They are involved in local events, holiday play schemes, and school clubs. Young people's specific interests are maintained through work placements which enable them to carry on with their hobbies while carrying out equestrian duties. This gives young people confidence and positive self-esteem. A young person said: 'There is lots to do, and we go fishing, camping and to London to watch my favourite show.'

Young people are achieving in their education and work placements. They have 100% attendance and are reaching their predicted academic milestones and career goals. They like going to school and have made new friends, which makes going to school a positive experience. A social worker said: 'X is doing really well in school and staff are very good in communicating important messages between school and myself.' Young people have transitioned from school, and are enjoying work placements and considering further education opportunities in social care.

Young people maintain attachments to their family and those important to them. Family and sibling visits are well planned and happen both at the home and at agreed locations away from the home. This ensures that young people and those important to them enjoy positive planned time together.

At times young people engage well with individualised independence targets. These targets are unique and tailored appropriately to the young person's age and understanding. Young people all take part in daily household activities and tasks. These include shopping, cooking and general cleaning of the home and their bedrooms. This supports the smooth running of the home and, as a result, young people successfully learn useful life skills.

Quality of care **good**

Young people are cared for by an experienced, motivated and supportive staff team. Staff have built a good rapport with young people at the home and are caring and responsive to their changing needs. Staff spend time with young people individually. As such they benefit from growing relationships, trust and attachments. The day-to-day work carried out with young people is of good quality. There are high levels of respect and compassion, and an acceptance of other's difficulties and differences. Needs relating to equality and diversity are recognised, met and celebrated by all living and working in the home.

Young people take part in individual meetings with key workers and the manager. These offer all the young people the opportunity to plan their activities, discuss menus and share their views about living together. Specific discussions with young people to support them in times of low mood and to discourage self-harm behaviours are handled sensitively. The home works well with external professionals which ensures the young people receive all of the appropriate professional support related to their specific needs. Placing social workers and health professionals were positive about the support young people receive in this home.

Young people feel listened to by staff and know how to complain; there have been no complaints from young people about the care they receive in this home. Feedback from an external health professional and a parent is extremely positive about the quality of care provided by the home. Comments include: 'the staff are brilliant at communicating with me. X is very complicated and is in work, and staff time arrangements so as X always attends their regular weekly meetings for support.', and: 'I am always welcomed when I visit the home and I am pleased with the care and support my child receives, this home is much better than the last home.'

Young people benefit from person-centred placement plans that are detailed and are regularly revised and updated. This means staff have all the information they need to provide appropriate care and meet the daily needs of young people. However, outcomes within these plans are vague and do not fully capture the progress individual young people have made. Young people, staff and placing social workers all confirm that young people fully contribute to their statutory review meetings. This ensures young people are involved in key decisions made about their future and that they can influence the decisions being made.

The home has good systems in place for the safe administration of medication and at each handover all medication is audited and signed for by staff, ensuring all medication in the home is accounted for. A revised medication policy is now in place in line with an agreed and medically-approved protocol. Staff have completed training in the safe handling of medication and have successfully arranged reviews of young people's medication to make sure they are prescribed the correct dosage to meet their specific health needs. All medication is stored securely which reduces the risk of unauthorised access. Young people are registered with local healthcare services and some have regular access to mental health services, which provide them with the support to meet their specific needs.

The décor and furnishings in the home are of a good standard. The house is inviting and welcoming, and provides young people with a comfortable environment in which to live. Since the last inspection, the basement 'chill out' room has been completed. This includes a television, karaoke machine and an information board for young people to use. This provides young people with additional activities and further communal space. The gardens and outdoor space are completed and well maintained. Photos of young people taking part in activities are on display around the home. Celebrations of young people's achievements are openly displayed.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people are safe, valued and respected at this home. Staff receive regular safeguarding training which ensures they have good up-to-date knowledge of current guidance and procedures. This gives them the confidence to make referrals when procedures dictate that they should. The home has made one safeguarding referral since the last inspection. This has been documented in detail within the home and all of the necessary agencies have been informed and strategies put in place to minimise any further incidents. Young people report that there are no issues of bullying within the home.

Young people rarely go missing from the home and records show four occasions since the last inspection when this has occurred. Effective missing from home protocols are appropriately followed by staff. Furthermore, staff have developed positive working relationships with the local police community support officer and the police missing from home co-ordinator to support the safety of young people. Both police officers report: 'The staff manage the young people well; official visits to this home are extremely rare.'

Young people have individual behaviour management plans and comprehensive risk assessments which refer staff to potential triggers and de-escalation techniques. There are few incidents where young people become challenging and display verbal and physical aggression. However, on two occasions restraint records show staff have used inappropriate comments and actions and have escalated a situation rather than reducing the need to restrain. The manager has been effective in picking up on both situations, has supervised the staff involved and has ensured all staff have completed refresher training in behaviour management. Young people are helped after incidents to de-brief and reflect on what happened and how they can better manage in the future.

Young people are protected by safer recruitment procedures the home has in place. Staff recruitment records show all necessary checks are undertaken and that references have been verified. Visitors to the home are also checked and their identification verified. This ensures young people are not at risk and are cared for by people who are suitable.

Young people live in a safe physical environment. Routine health and safety checks are up-to-date and staff members take individual and collective responsibility to report any concerns as they arise. Fire drills are routinely practised both during the day and at night so that young people know what to do in the event of a fire or an emergency evacuation.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has the necessary management qualifications and experience of working with young people in residential settings. She became the Registered Manager for this home in January 2014. The Registered Manager demonstrates a strong commitment towards her own continued learning and also drives the value of this with the senior management and staff team through their individual development plans, supervisions and team meetings. The home is sufficiently staffed with the majority of staff having completed the required qualification.

However, the level of delegation of responsibilities within the management team is not yet appropriate. As a result, more responsibility currently rests with the Registered Manager, who is being supported by an operations manager until the level of delegation becomes equal within the management team.

The home has a clear, accessible and detailed Statement of Purpose and a newly revised young people's guide giving young people, their families and placing authorities good information about the services offered by the home. However, the children's guide does not include information on how young people can contact Ofsted. This will provide young people with an opportunity to raise issues with the independent regulator of the home.

A recommendation from the last inspection in relation to the medication policy has been complied with. The home is well resourced, indicating the financial viability of the provider. The home has received one neighbour complaint since the last inspection and this was in relation to some external building work and the builders not replacing waste bins after they had finished work. The manager has dealt with this complaint effectively and it is recorded in detail within the home.

The recent appointment of an independent Regulation 33 visitor has brought rigour and challenge to quality assurance processes. Recent reports contain actions to achieve improved outcomes. These are welcomed by the team. The Registered Manager conducts regular monitoring checks, in line with Regulation 34 requirements. The Registered Manager described the strengths and weaknesses of the home. However, some systems, such as consultation questionnaires and person-centred placement plans are process driven and not outcome driven. This means there is little evidence to show the impact and value that living at the home has had

on young people's lives and how their life chances have improved over time.

The staff team receives a wide range of regularly refreshed, appropriate training. On one recent occasion, training was held to help staff to understand and deal with wound management and supporting young people who self-harm. This gives staff confidence to support young people in times of crisis.

Records are kept securely for confidentiality reasons and young people have access to and contribute to the records maintained in respect of them. All significant events relating to the protection of young people accommodated in the home are notified by the Registered Manager to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident; this further ensures the safety of young people.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.