

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	09/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC025812
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	McRae Residential Care Services Limited
Registered provider address	57–61 Lodge Road, Croydon CR0 2PH

Responsible individual	Kevin Henry
Registered manager	Paul Rhys-Taylor
Inspector	Angus MacKay

Inspection date	09/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. The management team is stable, appropriately qualified and its members work well together. The registered manager provides management to this home and another nearby that is part of the same organisation. The deputy manager is a consistent and dynamic presence in the home, providing daily management of the service under the supervision of the registered manager. She has suitable experience and qualification for her role and provides supervision and guidance to the staff team. The staff value the direction and support provided by this experienced management team. The independent visitor is providing feedback to appropriate people on staff performance as viewed by them and reported by children, families and social workers to aid in staff and manager's appraisals. These appraisals have not yet occurred. The independent visitor conducts regular visits to the home and sends her reports to HMCI and other parties in a timely manner. However, recent reports provide little analysis of available data or a helpful commentary on the quality of care in the home. The management team last reviewed the statement of purpose in 2015. It has some minor errors and lacks complete information on the admissions procedure, in particular, emergency admissions. For example, it has an incorrect address for the registered provider, does not explain how to get a copy of the complaints procedure and does not list the full actions that staff take to assist children to attend local schools. The statement does clearly explain the ethos of the home and how staff seek to aid children's development, making it a generally helpful guide for parents or placing authorities. However, the management team has not yet placed the statement of purpose on the home's website to make it more readily available to families or other interested parties. The staff team works diligently to encourage children to engage in education programmes, both inside and outside the home. The deputy manager has established a homework club with suitable educational resources to support children's study. Staff support children who attend local schools, as would any good parent, by attendance at meetings and through supporting educational progress	

and plans agreed in relevant meetings. Not all local authorities have worked closely with the staff, and on at least one occasion have not invited them to an educational planning meeting and have failed to progress agreed care plans at an appropriate pace. The registered manager and the deputy manager have addressed these issues directly with the relevant placing authority in an appropriate manner, seeking to improve outcomes for the individual child. In addition, the registered manager has provided a mentor for individual children where he feels they need this support to achieve good outcomes. Staff interventions are not currently resulting in good educational outcomes for the children. However, staff are persevering and trying differing approaches to improve children's engagement and progression in education.

Since the last inspection, the management team has successfully addressed the two requirements and four recommendations set then. Following that inspection, the registered provider submitted an action plan to Ofsted, explaining actions taken to address these issues, and during the inspection managers supported this with clear evidence of progress.

The deputy manager has completed the evidencing of the recruitment check that was missing at the last inspection. Managers maintain an efficient record of recruitment, listing all checks on a single central record and maintaining the actual records in individual personnel records. Checks are rigorously applied and are all in line with safer recruitment guidelines, ensuring that only suitable staff work with the children.

All staff receive appropriate training for their role. Where any staff do not have a suitable level 3 qualification or better, managers require them to obtain it within the first two years of their employment. All staff either have a suitable qualification or are working towards it.

The deputy manager maintains clear records on absences and periods of young people going missing from care. Recently, children have not responded to staff support and have high levels of going missing from care. The deputy manager ensures that children receive well-recorded return interviews which they sign to agree reasons given for absences. She has analysed this information and data, identifying clear patterns and triggers for these absences. The management team works closely with placing authorities, police and advocacy services in an attempt to reduce absences. This has included planning coordinated responses and agreeing increased levels of supervision in the home. The management team is proactive and innovative in its approach to gathering evidence to support police and social work interventions. This approach is providing evidence to support future planned interventions designed to safeguard the children.

The management team has good relationships with neighbours and local resources. Police regularly attend the home for social and educational reasons, giving safety talks to children. The management team encourages staff to manage difficult behaviour positively, ensuring that police interventions to assist in dealing with

incidents are rare and appropriate, avoiding unnecessarily criminalising children. On the rare occasions where serious incidents have occurred, staff notify all relevant parties in a timely manner. However, occasionally staff recording of incidents contains confusing detail and lacks some of the outcomes due to the use of an in-house reporting format.

The management team has introduced a revised policy for lone working. This includes guidance for staff on how to summon assistance and remain safe. The registered manager instituted this in January 2017 following consultation with staff. This is a suitably detailed policy supported by individual risk assessments. The registered manager keeps the risk assessments under review and changes them depending on individual risk and recent events. The regular updating of risk assessments ensures that managers identify and implement all appropriate supports to keep all parties safe.

Managers have established work with children creating records of their upbringing, including significant events from their time in care. This includes: albums with photographs of fun events, achievements and activities; memory boxes with items of significance for the children; and a shared online account which includes educational films as well as records of shared experiences. The records provide a history of the progress and achievements of the children.

Information about this children's home

This is a privately run home which provides care and accommodation for up to four young people. This home caters for young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/11/2016	Full	Good
22/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/11/2015	Full	Good
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that when the independent person assesses all relevant information and forms an impartial judgement about the quality of the care in the home, they include this in their report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.8)
- Ensure that the home develops and keep under review the statement of purpose. In particular, include an explanation of your approach to emergency admissions and all of the information outlined in schedule 1. In addition, publish a copy on your website unless to do so would prejudice the welfare of the children. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.5)
- Ensure that the home have in place a system to notify all appropriate people of any serious event within 24 hours. The system should cover the action that staff should follow if the event occurs at the weekend or on a public holiday. The notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. Consider using the existing Ofsted direct online referral procedure for notifying HMCI. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 63, paragraph 14.13)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, 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.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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