

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	17/11/2015
Unique reference number	SC025812
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	McRae Residential Care Services Limited
Registered person address	61 Lodge Road, CROYDON, CR0 2PH

Responsible individual	Sheila McCrae
Registered Manager	Paul Rhys-Taylor
Inspector	Angus Mackay OBE

Inspection date	17/11/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained Effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires Improvement

SC025812

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Managers have a strong focus on young people's attendance and achievement in education.
- There are good relationships and attachments between staff and young people.
- Staff manage difficult behaviour by a combination of rewards, sanctions and assertive verbal interventions. Consequently, there has not been any restraints for several years.
- Staff build good relationships with young people's families, supporting and improving positive contacts.
- Staff help young people in maintaining positive cultural identities and learning respect for others.
- The home works positively with community police to break down barriers with young people and improve their understanding of citizenship.

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

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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The registered person must recruit staff using recruitment procedures that are designed to ensure children's safety. The requirements are that- full and satisfactory information is available in relation to the individual in respect of each of the matters in Schedule 2. In particular where staff have previously worked with children or vulnerable adults they verify the reason why the employment ended. (Regulation 32(1)(3)(d))	31/12/2015
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ('the statement of purpose') which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must- notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. Subject to paragraph (6), the registered person must ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its statement of purpose. (Regulation 16(1) (2)(3)(b)(5))	31/12/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that all staff have their performance and fitness to carry out their role formally appraised at least once annually. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.5)
- Create and implement a workforce development plan which includes all relevant information on staff training, development and supervision. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.8)
- When completing a review of the home, against the Quality Standards, focus on the circumstances for the home and any areas of high risk for the young people during that period. In particular provide a clear analysis of areas considered and the actions stemming from this and how the home will address them. (The Guide to the Quality Standard, page 65, paragraph 15.5)

- Ensure that the independent person makes a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the care home and comments on this in the report. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- Ensure that where staff have offered young people an independent return home interview they record this and the young person's response. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- Ensure that young people's records are up to date and provide an accurate description of the work done with them. In particular ensure that care plans and health care plans clearly show who is responsible for tasks, when they are completed and that they evidence young people's progress. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)
- Review and revise the home's safeguarding policy and procedures ensuring they include guidance on child sexual exploitation. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 44, paragraph 9.21)

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
22/10/2014	Full	Good
07/01/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
20/06/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people enjoy living in the home and have built warm and affectionate relationships with staff. They say that the home is better than previous places they have been. Many have complex presenting problems which have contributed to numerous placement breakdowns. Parents and social workers praise the work of staff. One social worker comments, 'He has complex needs and we struggled to place him. The fact he is still in placement is amazing.' Young people make progress in reducing aggressive behaviours which have often lead to the failure of previous placements. They reduce the use of inappropriate language and improve interpersonal skills. Keyworkers do sessions with young people, encouraging the development of moral values. Positive behaviour plans outline how staff work with young people but also contain information more usually contained in care or placement plans. The manager and deputy manager altered these during the inspection making them more accessible to young people. In addition they included timescales for the completion of targets and who is responsible for completing them. Young people can now clearly see what they have to achieve and how to do it. Young people have variable achievements educationally. Staff are aware of their educational needs and support these in the home. They receive weekly school reports on young people's attendance, levels and achievement enabling them to support them appropriately. Young people who are not in full time education do education programmes with staff during normal school hours. With this support they are gradually engaging with education and adjusting to a normal school day. Those at school have been gradually improving attendance. Reports from school indicate that individuals are slowly engaging with work and improving classroom behaviour. One parent says, 'His attendance at school has improved. It is a process of continuous improvement. Before this it has never worked. In this home his education is constantly moving forward.' Staff maintain online health care plans for young people. These accurately identify all medical issues young people have and any ongoing treatment. There is a separate plan of action which the manager incorporated into the online plan during the inspection; staff have not always kept these ongoing action sheets up to date. Young people are improving their health in the home and learning how to transpose learning on how to stay healthy to their family homes. One parent says,	

'His willingness to take medication has improved. He would not take it at home. Now he will take his tablets that is something the home have helped with.'

Young people take part in a range of activities in the home and in the local community. Staff encourage them to improve their health by a combination of exercise and healthy eating. Staff assist young people to meet any cultural needs they have and to share in celebrating other young people's cultures. Young people maintain links to their home communities and build an understanding of the positive aspects of multicultural living in the home.

Young people maintain links with families and friends. Staff support them in having appropriate contacts with their family home. Any restrictions on this are not imposed by the home but agreed through reviews and planning meetings. Parents praise the work the staff do on keeping them in touch with the young people's progress and development. Staff work diligently at building positive relationships with young people and helping them to form healthy attachments. One parent comments, 'The keyworkers are getting him to build really good relationships. He does not easily build these so they must be doing something right.'

The statement of purpose is not clear on the young people the home works with. However, managers and staff have a common understanding of the needs of the young people they will accommodate. The manager appropriately risk assesses potential new admissions and the impact they would have on the existing group of residents. Local authorities praise the sensitivity and thoroughness of staff in managing admissions. One social worker comments on the admissions process saying, 'The managers were very gentle and understanding during a very difficult meeting with the family and the young person. Following admission, the home have been very supportive of contact with all of the family.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people say they feel safe in the home and can confide in staff. They know how to make a complaint. Staff do regular key work sessions with them, addressing any areas of risk and seeking to reduce these. Risk assessments are helpfully detailed and track young people's progress in reducing risks. Staff encourage local police to meet with young people as part of the risk reduction strategies. Young people are learning how to remain safe in the community through their engagement in this work. Staff encourage positive behaviour in young people through a combination of	

rewards and sanctions. The manager reviews the effectiveness of these measures as part of his monitoring of the home. Young people are gradually improving their interactions and positive social skills with this reinforcement.

Staff manage major negative behaviour through their positive relationships with young people. They build good attachments and use these and a range of diversionary skills to defuse challenging situations. Consequently, there has been no use of restraint since before the last full inspection of the home. Young people are gradually learning how to control their own behaviour through these interventions. One parent said her son had previously been very intimidating and threatening but now responded appropriately to her.

Young people with significant histories of going missing from care have settled in the home and have not gone missing or absent. An individual with significant periods of going missing reduced this over time to short periods of absence, generally late returns from unsupervised time out of the home. Staff persist with young people and ensure that they are welcomed back into the home when they have been absent or missing. Young people who have been missing have always taken part in a return interview with police. However, only one young person received a visit from a social worker on his return, following an extensive absence from the home. The responsible local authority has not provided this individual with an opportunity to have an independent return interview and staff have not offered him this opportunity. None of the current young people have gone missing so this has no impact on them.

The home has several child protection policies each of which covers a separate area. The manager updated the policies in September 2015. The revised policies contain information on: child protection; the threats of radicalisation and extremism; addressing bullying; cyberbullying; whistle blowing; and self-harm. There is no guidance on child sexual exploitation.

Staff have an understanding of child protection and apply this in their work with young people. The Registered Manager and deputy manager have completed training on the prevent agenda and are applying this in their practice. The responsible person has scheduled all staff to complete this training in December 2015. In his development plan he has identified the need for training in child sexual exploitation as a priority. The safe care of young people is enhanced by staff competency in child protection and their understanding and application of the home's policies and procedures.

Staff recruitment is largely in line with safer recruitment guidelines. However, the manager has not fully completed all checks required. He does enhance the safe selection of staff by his involvement of young people in appointment panels. Young people improve their social skills and sense of ownership and belonging in the home through their meaningful involvement in recruitment.

The home do regular checks of health and safety issues including an annual fire risk assessment. The manager has completed the annual review of the fire risks and is updating the risk assessment to incorporate this information. Staff conduct daily checks on safety within the home as part of their monitoring of health and safety issues identified in the health and safety risk assessment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The Registered Manager is the manager of this home and a sister home located within a five-minute drive. He has a social work qualification and has been a Registered Manager with Ofsted since 2007. He has been the Registered Manager of this setting since 2012. Each home has an experienced manager in place to supplement his daily management. This arrangement is currently providing adequate support to the management of the home. The deputy manager has a level 5 qualification and extensive experience of working in children's homes. As part of the succession planning for the home she is being prepared to register with Ofsted. The home has a relatively diverse workforce which generally matches the ethnicity of the young people. Where the staff team fails to provide appropriate role models for young people the manager creatively uses bank staff to address the imbalance. The independent visitor supplies reports on the conduct of the home directly to HMCI. The reports contain a detailed review of the activity of the home and include interviews with young people, social workers and occasionally family members. The visitor sets targets for the manager and routinely checks progress against these, driving improvement in the care of the young people. The report format now includes a helpful final summary linked directly to the Quality Standards. However, there is no comment on the safeguarding of young people and whether the home is promoting their welfare. The manager has completed a review of the home which focuses on the experiences of the young people living there. The report contains some analysis of their behaviour and sets targets for the following six-month period. However, the report does not fully explore or explain patterns of behaviour and the impact staff actions have on them. The manager uses a format linked to the requirements in place prior to April 2015 consequently it is not adequately linked to the Quality Standards.	

The manager has recently completed a training needs analysis. The analysis identifies the need for training about the sexual exploitation of young people and the creation of a workforce development plan. There are elements of the workforce development plan in place but no overall training plan for the home. The manager maintains records of staff training but there is no clear indication of when training updates are required other than the safeguarding training. The manager has a policy for staff induction but this does not detail agreed timescales or core training. This arrangement does not ensure the continuous professional development of staff.

All staff receive regular monthly supervision which has a strong focus on basic care tasks. The manager has commenced annual appraisals to support individuals' structured development. However, not all staff have completed appraisals.

The home has an updated statement of purpose which the manager has not sent to HMCI. The statement of purpose is incomplete and does not accurately reflect the quality of the service provided. It has significant gaps in information and does not describe how staff meet the needs of children accommodated, what accommodation they provide, ways of working and how others can access important policies and procedures. Staff do have a clear understanding of the ethos of the home and the ways of working which in the short term minimises the impact of this on young people.

The manager ensures the regular maintenance of the building and that its décor and furnishings are suitable. Young people participate in all changes in décor and purchasing of resources enhancing their ownership and feeling of belonging in the home. The interior of the home is comfortable with suitable space for visitors, meals and recreation.

The registered person notifies appropriate authorities about significant events relating to the welfare and protection of young people. Where young people are at risk, the staff act swiftly to ensure their safety. During the inspection the manager reviewed the incidents which he would consider serious enough to notify HMCI of. This followed one instance of criminal damage leading to a young person's arrest which he shared with the social worker but not HMCI. The modified arrangements ensure the provider notifies all parties of incidents he considers to be serious.

The manager maintains and reviews an assessment of the location of the home. This assessment contains information on local resources as well as known risks. The manager works closely with the local police to enhance young people's understanding of risks and local hotspots. The police were due to attend during the inspection to provide positive information to the young people and encourage them to see police as positive role models. Unfortunately, due to national security issues, they postponed the visit to December.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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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