

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	22/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC025812
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	McRae Residential Care Services Limited
Registered person address	57-61 Lodge Road, CROYDON, CR0 2PH

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

Inspection date	22/02/2016
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 judge that it has, Sustained Effectiveness. The registered manager continues to manage this home and a sister home a short drive way. This home has an experienced deputy who has a level 5 diploma in management who effectively supplements the management of the home. She provides regular supervision and support to the staff team and has immediate access to the responsible individual and registered manager if required. The home continues to provide good care to the young people living there. One said, 'I like it here. I like the deputy manager, she is funny and listens to us.' The deputy manager ensures that all staff have regular monthly supervision, supported by annual appraisals. All staff have now completed their appraisals and have agreed improvement goals, for the coming year. The management team gather information from young people about staff performance via young people's meetings called teen talk, key worker sessions, and one to one discussions with the acting manager. The manager does not yet use this information in staff appraisals. Where this information has highlighted difficulties in an individual's relationships with staff, the deputy manager has taken effective action. She has applied learning acquired from a building positive relationships course, to explore the difficulties and actively address them with the parties involved. One young person said, 'They do listen to us and discuss our issues not just ignore them.' The deputy manager is ensuring that young people are involved in the running of the home and gain in self-esteem and confidence. The registered manager has submitted a revised statement of purpose and an updated children's guide to HMCI. Staff all know the ethos of the home and practically apply this in their work with the young people. In particular, there is a strong focus on providing young people with the skills to look after themselves. The documents accurately describe the home's approach to working with young people and developing their personal interests, improving health and education and improving their relationships. Young people understand the approach as described in their booklet and can explain the rewards and sanctions policy in accurate detail. They feel safe in the home and say they know how to get outside	

assistance if they require it.

All young people are encouraged to attend education and to engage in preparation for independence programmes. Attendance at education is mixed but currently young people are improving one going from a poor 38% to 60% in one term. Another achieving nearly 90% with absences being due to sickness. All young people have 100% attendance at school as a placement plan target, supported by a bonus scheme and staff encouragement. Targets in placement plans have improved and clearly show what the young person's target, who is monitoring it and review times. The deputy manager is constantly improving the detail contained in these targets and monitoring where young people have achieved them, to ensure they are current and relevant to the young person.

The registered manager has completed a review of the home against the quality standards. He has included development and training plans in this document evidencing clear thinking about improvements in the home and staff development. The report links to the detailed and well-constructed workforce development plan. This provides a clear structure for the ongoing development of the efficient and effective staff team. In addition, he has effectively used the monthly independent visitor's reports and targets to aid in this process of continuous improvement. These reports are a helpful check on compliance with the home's own standards and comment on the conduct of the home. They do not explicitly comment on whether the home effectively safeguards young people but do comment when there is a safeguarding issue. The registered manager's report provides good information on staff development and some analysis of the quality of care provided to young people.

The management team carefully plan new admissions with due regard to the impact they would have on the young people currently living in the home. Where possible young people visit the home in advance and staff visit them where they are currently living. This allows successful planning around new admissions and aids young people settle successfully. Generally, young people also leave the home in a planned way. The management team recently admitted a young person in an emergency, following an incident in another home managed by this company. In addition, the management team closed another young person's placement following an incident of bullying and assault. The actions were speedy to ensure the safe care of young people. The management team are reviewing these incidents to learn from these poor outcomes.

Most young people are making progress in the home. They have reduced absences from care with all but one young person never going missing. Where this individual has gone missing, staff support him back into the home and complete detailed debriefings. Only one young person has gone missing in the period since the last inspection and staff have offered him an independent return interview following each absence. To aid in keeping young people safe, the deputy manager makes

good use of her positive relationship with the community support police. Recently they came and discussed staying safe in the community with the young people. Young people say that staff are working with them to keep them safe, reduce drug taking and improve their behaviour. One young person said, 'I have made progress here. I can control my anger much better now. I stop and think now not just act. I am getting better slowly but steadily.'

The management team have effective working relationships with a range of external agencies. The deputy manager uses these relationships to enhance the care, education and treatment, staff provide to young people. She has developed effective relationships with virtual school heads from placing authorities, aiding in ensuring young people have appropriate plans and supports. She encourages young people's engagement with external agencies such as child and adolescent mental health teams, drug counsellors, youth offending teams and social workers. Emergency services including police and fire brigade are working in the home with young people to raise their awareness of risks in the community and dangers of smoking in buildings. Staff provide young people with opportunities to address entrenched problems such as drug taking and offending with this professional support and input. One young person said, 'They have done all sorts of things to get me to stop smoking drugs. They have drugs awareness workers, posters and staff going on about the bad effects all of the time.' These interventions are not always successful but staff are persistent in their attempts to improve positive outcomes for young people.

Since the last inspection, the home has successfully addressed all requirements and most recommendations. In particular, they have completed a missing check on a new member of staff's history of employment abroad. They have modified their procedure to ensure that they complete all checks required in safer recruitment of staff. One recommendation, relating to independent visitor's reports, is repeated, as it is not yet fully met.

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 behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17/11/2015	Full	Good
03/03/2015	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
22/10/2014	Full	Good
07/01/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress

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 recommendation(s):

- Ensure that when 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 they comment on this in the report. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.5)
- Ensure that, when conducting staff appraisals, managers endeavour to include the views of other professionals who have worked with the member of staff and the views of young people in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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 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 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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