

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC025812
Inspector	Angus Mackay
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	McRae Residential Care Services Limited
Registered person address	61 Lodge Road Croydon Surrey CR0 2PH

Responsible individual	Kevin Henry
Registered manager	Paul Stephen Rhys-Taylor
Date of last inspection	07/01/2014

Inspection date	22/10/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory 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	adequate
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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The home is well managed and makes good use of independent visitor's reports to improve the quality of care. The manager makes impressive use of his own internal monitoring of the home ensuring that appropriate interventions are made in a timely manner to aid young people's progress. The staff show a good understanding of the needs of the young people and aids them in meeting their own personal and cultural needs, as well as coming to an improved understanding of other cultures and religions. Young people enjoy their time in the home and have warm, mutually respectful, relationships with the staff team. Young people make good progress in reducing aggression and offending and in engaging positively in the community. All young people talk about gaining in confidence and social workers say young people have made excellent progress in addressing complex personal issues through the influence of strong role models like the Registered Manager. One young person saying, 'The manager values the young people that live here and if given the chance can make a big difference in their lives. He is the main person here and it is because of him that I am so grounded now.'

The manager had planned a review of policies and procedures in the home for the month following this inspection. A number of those planned for review require updating. Those were identified during the inspection as: notifications of significant events; child protection and safeguarding; complaints; young people's guide;

restraint recording ;and staff disciplinary procedures. Requirements were made in relation to these policies and procedures and to the provision of independent visitor's reports to Ofsted in a timely manner. The good care practice in the home and their provision of advocacy and counselling services to young people has ensured that they have continued to remain safe.

During the inspection other shortfalls were noted in the following: the recording of fire drills; the evaluation of training and development activity; maintaining up to date and comprehensive personal risk assessments on young people; and the need for up to date advocacy and support services numbers in the young people's guide.

Full report

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
07/01/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
20/06/2013	Full	good
17/12/2012	Interim	good progress
30/04/2012	Full	adequate

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
16 (2001)	update the policy which is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the children's home from abuse, in particular ensuring it includes guidance as to actions to take if the allegation is about the manager (Regulation 16(1)(a))	28/11/2014
17B (2001)	the registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline in the children's home, a written record is made in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the details listed (3) (a) to(i) and (4) (a) and (b)) (Regulation 17B (3)(4))	28/11/2014

24 (2001)	ensure that the complaints procedure includes the name address and telephone number of HMCI (Regulation 24(4)(a))	28/11/2014
27 (2001)	ensure that the disciplinary procedure provides for the suspension of an employee where necessary in the interests of the safety or welfare of children accommodated in the home, in particular be explicit in guidelines relating to an allegation against the manager of the home (Regulation 27(2)(a))	28/11/2014
30 (2001)	ensure that if, in relation to any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place , the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table (Regulation 30)	28/11/2014
33 (2001)	ensure that the independent person produces a written report about a visit (referred to in this regulation as the 'independent person's report') and provides a copy of the report to HMCI. (Regulation 33 (9)(a))	28/11/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure all children are familiar with the emergency escape plan and have practiced this so they know what to do in an emergency (NMS10.9)
- evaluate the learning and development plan annually (NMS 18.2)
- update the children's guide ensuring it contains details on how a child can contact their Reviewing Officer, the Children's Commissioner, Ofsted, and how to secure access to an independent advocate (NMS 13.5)
- ensure that the home implements a proportionate approach to risk assessment. (NMS 4.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people use the support from the home to aid them in engaging positively in education, training or work. Some students have made excellent progress in improving attendance at school from 60% to 97%. Some young people have improved their punctuality from 30% to 100%. Other students, who have previously struggled to even leave their house, have commenced courses and are motivated to engage in work or college. Students' behaviour at college has varied from good to outstanding. Whilst at college all young people have improved their engagement compared to previous experiences. One college tutor said, '...he has made incredible progress here and has successfully challenged his preconceptions of himself as a failure. He has been successful because we have continuity of approach between us, the home and the student.'

Young people understand about health issues and are aware of the positive impact of good diet and exercise. They regularly engage in physical activities, improving their health, reducing weight and improving their self confidence. Young people say they get help from staff to aid them in selecting mainly healthy foods, although they are allowed some snacks which are not so healthy. One young person saying, 'Before coming here I was unhealthy, unhygienic and drinking too much. Here they have helped me to turn that around. I have improved my health, hygiene and confidence.' Some young people are engaging with external counselling services allowing them to successfully address complex personal issues. Young people have joined staff in training about sexual health, learning how to keep themselves and others safe. Young people have a good understanding of their personal health targets and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Some young people are highly motivated to help others in the community and have achieved local awards at high profile events. The young people start with a desire to help others and develop civic responsibility, gain respect and tremendous improvement in their self-view.

Young people with previous difficulties in remaining in a placement have reduced extreme behaviours and are positively engaging with staff. Young people say they can address issues in this home which they previously struggled to even admit to having. Some young people use mentoring services improving their social skills, communication aptitudes and community involvement. All young people are reducing high levels of violent or aggressive behaviour. One young person saying, 'I used to be very aggressive and get in fights, but I no longer do that. I'm very calm here and work through my problems verbally.' Colleges report that young people have been able to avoid physical confrontations in situations where they could not have done so a year ago. Young people are gaining self-confidence, social skills and an ability to interact positively in social situations

Young people rarely go missing and have reduced anti-social and criminal behaviours. Some admit to occasional drug use but say that staff are constantly and rigorously addressing this with them including helping them to attend counselling sessions. One social worker said of a young person, 'He was a prolific offender and this has diminished with the support from the manager.'

Young people make excellent progress in gaining essential life skills. They contribute to their pathway plans which include learning how to look after themselves. They learn basic life skills in the home with reducing staff support and increasing levels of independence. One young person saying, 'I have improved my confidence by being able to look after myself. I can do ironing, washing, budgeting and look after myself.'

Quality of care

good

Young people enjoy living in the home and are proud to show off their personalised bedrooms. One young person saying, 'I have had lots of placement breakdowns. I do not believe that any other place would be better for me.' The home is comfortable and well maintained however the independent person describes it as, '...tired in places.' The manager has a long term development plan to upgrade all areas in the home and this has commenced with redecoration of the hallway and some communal areas.

Young people and staff have excellent relationships, one young person describing it as a family and attributing all staff with significant roles in that family. Young people identify the manager and his deputy as key people in their support and development. One young person said of the manager, 'He is very candid and has a lot of love and care for us. He has helped all of us to have success in changing our lives.' Young people settle in the home and are able to address their personal needs and presenting problems.

Staff are sensitive to the different needs of the young people and engage them in regular discussions about how they can meet their own personal needs. Young people occasionally attend church with staff and say that staff respect them and their backgrounds. Young people praise staff engagement with them saying of one member of staff, 'He is good at listening, and he is a sensitive human with natural human responses. He really listens to you and he will respond appropriately giving you help or sensible advice.' Young people make good progress in meeting their personal, cultural and religious needs in the home.

The home has a complaints procedure which is accessible to the public as well as the young people. Complaints are effectively responded to maintaining good community relationships as well as good order within the home. However the complaints procedure does not have the necessary contact numbers to allow young people to independently access advocacy support or external agencies such as Childline. The

home is good at engaging young people with advocacy and counselling services minimising the lack of these contact details.

The staff are proactive and relentless in their efforts to engage young people in education, training or work. Young people are aware that they must engage in these activities and, with staff support, have made significant progress in their positive engagement in these schemes. Staff enjoy excellent relationships with schools, colleges and local employment schemes and work preparation schemes. This positive relationship enables staff to act as advocates for the young people aiding them to resolve attainment, personal or attendance problems.

Staff ensure that all young people are registered with local health services and attend all appointments. Where necessary, staff aid young people in attending specialist mental health or counselling services . One young person said of this support, 'I have grown as a person and have been able to get to grips with my life. You need time and support to put these things right and they gave me the space and time to sort myself out.'

Staff treat young people as adults and give them a lot of responsibility in the home. Young people have to take on a lot of responsibility for their own care and the care of the environment. They say that staff aid in keeping everywhere hygienic but push them in the right direction. One young person said, 'I have improved in confidence and my behaviour has changed for the better. I get more responsibility now and that has helped me to progress and improve my self-confidence and feel better about myself.'

Keeping children and young people safe adequate

Staff recruitment follows guidance for safe appointments. Managers have discussed recruitment with young people who have contributed questions to panels for all future appointments. These measures improve young people's ownership of the home and the selection and appointment of suitable people.

All staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding. They are knowledgeable about the practical application of this training, including how to take disclosures and how to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff practically address issues which can directly impact on the young people they care for such as: gang affiliation; sexual exploitation; and on line safety. The policies and procedures to support this work do not accurately reflect the work in the home. They do not include all current issues or always use current terminology. Neither the child protection policy nor the staff disciplinary code explains specifically what to do if allegations are made about the manager. Staff practical application of their training minimises the negative impact on young people.

Staff use positive behavioural programmes with young people. There have been no restraints for several years with staff using distraction techniques, sanctions and verbal interactions to defuse situations. One young person's mother saying, 'I must tell you he has made enormous progress in the home. Previously he would have been aggressive and destructive since there he actually talks through things now he speaks to the manager or care workers.' However the log book for recording restraints does not cover all required areas. There has been no impact on young people, from this incorrectly formatted log, due to there being no physical interventions.

Local police community support officers (PCSOs) have excellent relationships with the home and drop in for social talks to the young people. On occasions the home have positively used the PCSOs to address behavioural issues in the home, or to join in discussions about current issues such as gang culture or drug taking. Young people benefit from these links, developing a positive view of policing and an understanding of how to use these agencies positively.

Young people reduce the frequency and duration of occasions on which they go missing. Staff are aware of the diverse needs of the young people and put in place practical means of addressing these. However individual risk assessments are not comprehensive, lack complete guidance on ameliorative measures, do not contain review dates and do not clearly track young people's current risk level. The excellent monthly reports on young people's programmes minimise the impact of this on them.

Staff use sanctions appropriately and now involve young people in discussion about these and means of earning back lost bonuses. Young people confirm that they think sanctions are generally fair and that they can negotiate alternatives with staff. Young people are improving their behaviour and learning important negotiating skills through this approach.

Fire safety measures are in place and include regular testing of equipment and fire drills. Staff are trained in fire safety with some staff having advanced training as fire marshals. Following fire drills staff conduct a review of the effectiveness of the drill. However the home does not record the names of young people taking part in fire drills so it is impossible to evidence that all young people have practiced a fire drill.

Leadership and management

good

Since the last inspection the home has partially addressed the one requirement set. Visits by the independent visitor occur monthly and present an honest picture of the home. The reports highlight areas for improvement in all areas including: the environment; record keeping; and staff performance. However the manager has not been sending the reports to Ofsted in a timely manner. The manager uses the reports positively in driving improvements in the home and incorporates actions into his own monthly internal monitoring of the home, reducing the impact of this failure

on young people. The manager has updated the statement of purpose but has not yet updated the children and young people's guide, in particular the contact numbers for external support agencies.

The manager has established a highly effective internal monitoring system of the quality of care in the home. He analyses all aspects of the young people's care and behaviours and uses this analysis creatively in addressing young people's behaviours and in tracking improvements. He incorporates advice and findings from the independent person's monthly visits into his written reports on the home. The manager evidences a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home including many of the issues identified during this inspection. For example all policies and procedures were planned to be reviewed in the month following this inspection. The report is sent to Ofsted at the required frequency enhancing the safe care of the young people.

All staff receive regular supervision, which they describe as helpful. The format for recording supervision showed the main topics discussed but did not contain sufficient detail to provide an accurate record evidencing the quality of the supervision. The home reverted to the previous format during the inspection which demonstrates good quality supervision for staff. Staff engage in regular training and the home maintains a training plan for all staff. However the manager does not evaluate the effectiveness of training on an annual basis. This has not currently had a negative impact on the care of the young people as the staff evidence a strong understanding of their role and how to meet the needs of the young people.

The home is well maintained and appropriate health and safety checks are in place. The testing of portable appliances was due in the week of the inspection but all other checking was up to date.

The home has good relationships with external agencies including schools, colleges, social workers and a variety of advocacy and counselling services. The home reports significant incidents relating to the protection of young people to the relevant bodies as required. However they were using an out of date version of the relevant schedule. This was replaced in staff guidelines during the inspection.

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.