

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	14/10/2015
Unique reference number	SC030367
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Residential special school
Registered person	Cotswold Chine School
Responsible individual	Jason Lukas
Registered manager	Kelly Lawson
Inspector	Paula Lahey Chris Golbourn Sarah Canto

Inspection date	14/10/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and /or their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate

SC030367

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is inadequate because:

- There are serious failures by the registered persons to manage disclosures and concerns raised by children about some of their recent negative experiences in the home. The registered person has failed to ensure that serious child protection incidents have been managed in line with locally agreed child protection procedures and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015'. As a result, young people are not kept safe. Oversight of the home and, in particular, the management of child protection, fails to identify weaknesses. Despite monitoring systems being in place, the registered persons have not ensured that these are rigorous or effective. There are four Quality Standards and five of the Children's Homes Regulation 2015 that the home has failed to meet.
- The opportunities to prepare young people for adulthood, to develop age-appropriate skills and to ensure that they have the same experiences as other young people of a similar age, are limited. Staff rigidly apply daily routines and house rules in a number of the residences. The majority of young people go to bed at the same time, regardless of their age or needs; young people who do not need monitoring have alarms on their bedroom doors; not all young people are allowed to keep their own toiletries; staff monitor all emails that young people send to other people; some young people have to move from their home into another residence during holiday times to fit in with staff rotas; and young people have limited amounts of free time and opportunities to take age-appropriate risks. For many young people, these routines fail to match their individual ages, abilities and needs. In addition, these rules are not based on the actual risks young people may face. As a result, young people's experiences and opportunities to develop are narrow.
- Two compliance notices have been issued to the home in respect of the protection of children and the quality and purpose of their care.

The children's home strengths

Staff support young people's specific health needs in a caring, discreet and sensitive way. Social workers said that young people have made progress and developed their self-esteem as a result of this support. Key workers encourage young people to understand their individual circumstances and histories by helping them to compile scrapbooks with photos and memorabilia.

Journeys to and from school and work with teachers and education staff are positive. As a result, some young people who have previously been out of school before this placement now engage well and attend regularly. Some young people enjoy work experience opportunities in the provider's community café and adult residential care provision, and with the maintenance and information technology teams.

Young people benefit from specialist help, including access to support from dieticians and continence teams and specific therapeutic care to promote their emotional health.

Young people have fun and are active in the home. A number of young people particularly like playing a computer game and the staff have produced an internal version so young people can safely 'share' this online game together.

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
6: The quality and purpose of care standard* In order to meet the quality and purpose of care standard the registered person must ensure that staff (i) understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; (ii) protect and promote each child's welfare; (iii) treat each child with dignity and respect; (iv) provide personalised care that meets each child's needs; (vi) help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult; (vii) provide to children living in the home the physical necessities they need in order to live there comfortably; (viii) provide to children personal items that are appropriate for their age and understanding; and (ix) make decisions about the day-to-day arrangements for each child, in accordance with the child's relevant plans, which give the child an appropriate degree of freedom and choice. Ensure that any rules or routines implemented are personalised and meet the individual needs of each child	20/11/2015
7: The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard in respect of children's placement plans, safety level plans, the children's welcome guide, and advocacy, the registered person must ensure that each child (b) (ii) has access to the home's children's guide, the home's complaints procedure, placement plans and safety level plans in a format that is accessible and child friendly. (iii) ensure that each child is given appropriate advocacy support	08/01/2016

12: The protection of children standard* In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure (a) that staff (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm; (v) understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children that are assigned to them by the registered person; (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare; and (vii) are familiar with and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies; (b) that the home's day-to-day care is arranged and delivered so as to keep each child safe and to protect them effectively from harm; (e) that the effectiveness of the home's child protection policy is monitored regularly	20/11/2015
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must (2)(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; (f) understand the impact the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this information to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; (g) demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on- (ii) feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvement in the quality of care provided in the home	08/01/2016
22: Contact and access to communications The registered person must ensure that children are provided at all reasonable times with access to the following facilities which they may use without reference to persons working in the home - (a) a telephone on which to make and receive calls in private; and (b) facilities to send and receive post and, if the facilities are provided for the use of children, electronic mail, in private	20/11/2015

(Regulation 22 (3)(a,b))	
35: Behaviour management policies and records The registered person must keep the behaviour management policy under review and, where appropriate, revise it. In particular, ensure that detailed records are maintained about the use of restraint, explaining all of staff's actions and interactions with children; and ensure that children who are witness to a restraint are provided with a de-brief following the incident and a record is maintained of this discussion(Regulation 35 (2))	20/11/2015
37: Other records The registered person must maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4. In particular ensure that each of the residences maintains a record of all visitors to the home, and to children, including the names of visitors and the reasons for the visit. In addition, ensure that the time of the visit is also recorded (Regulation 37 (2)(a))	20/11/2015
44: Independent person: visits and reports The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month. When the independent person is carrying out a visit, the registered person must help them to, if they consent, interview the parents, relatives and persons with parental responsibility for the children. The independent person must produce a report which sets out, in particular, the independent person's opinion as to whether children are effectively safeguarded; and the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being (Regulation 44 (1)(2)(a)(4)(a,b))	08/01/2016
45: Review of quality of care The registered person must complete a review of the quality of care provided for children at least once every 6 months. In order to complete a quality of care review the registered person must establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the quality of care provided for children; the feedback and opinions of children about the children's home, its facilities and the quality of care they receive in it an, any actions the registered person considers necessary in order to improve or maintain the quality of care provided for children. In particular, ensure that the monitoring is robust to identify and act on breaches of regulation and necessary improvements. (Regulation 45 (1)(2)(a,b,c))	08/01/2016

* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This independent school is also registered as a children's home. The school follows the principles of care and education developed by Rudolf Steiner. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to a maximum of 42 children and young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or complex needs. The accommodation for children and young people is provided across seven houses located on or near to the main school site.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2015	CH - Full	Inadequate
30/03/2015	CH - Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/12/2014	CH - Full	Good
25/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Inadequate
The registered persons have failed to manage all child protection concerns in line with locally agreed safeguarding procedures. This has had a negative impact on children and young people. Senior managers do not ensure that young people's needs are always central to the decisions made or action taken. Senior managers do not insist that social workers or a person independent of the home always speaks with young people who have made disclosures as part of any agreed investigation. The registered persons have not ensured each young person has an adult to speak on their behalf as an independent advocate; this was a weakness at the previous inspection. Staff fail to ensure young people have a right to privacy. Staff monitor emails that young people send in confidence to external agencies. In addition, the registered persons have not ensured that all young people can use the home's telephone without the permission of staff. These systems reduce opportunities for young people to share any worries or concerns that they may have about their placement with a trusted adult or a helpline. The ability for young people to experience age-appropriate opportunities equal to other young people of a similar age is limited. Some of these experiences are controlled by the 'safety level' assigned to a young person and the rigid approach by some staff when implementing house routines. The registered persons have failed to ensure that routines meet the individual needs or capabilities of each young person. A member of staff said that the bed times and moving between houses in the holiday times, 'relates to the staff shift pattern; it is the way things have always been'. Senior managers told the inspectors that staff should be more confident to use a more flexible approach. Senior staff have failed to ensure that such a flexible approach is properly implemented. Staff assess and grade all young people on a 'social safety level' which determines the amount of independence they can have. All young people start on the lowest level regardless of their individual abilities and needs. As a result, their personal rights are restricted. Not all young people know how they can move up a 'social safety level' and gain greater independence, as the plans staff give to them are difficult to understand. In addition, the system is not adapted for young people	

whose capabilities may limit them from being independent and to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

The registered persons have failed to ensure that placement plans, safety level plans and the children's welcome guide are produced in a version that all young people can understand. Young people's views and comments are not incorporated in these documents.

Staff hold daily meetings with the young people as part of a therapeutic model used in the home. The meeting requires young people and staff to say how they are feeling, what their goal is, and who will help them to achieve the goal. Staff do not always react at the time to the comments young people make, limiting the opportunity to develop their communication skills. The registered person told the inspectors that staff should 'validate and respond at the time to young people's comments' in line with the therapeutic model. Senior managers have not ensured this approach is implemented effectively.

Although some young people enjoy a range of activities, very few are members of clubs or groups outside the home. During the inspection, three young people expressed to inspectors that this was something they enjoyed before coming to live at this home and would like to do so again. A member of staff agreed and said, 'I would like to see more independence, see more young people going to clubs outside the school'.

Some of the residences are not as homely as others in the group. Bars on windows, seen at the previous inspection, remain in one residence. There is a lack of colour in the decoration of many of the homes. During the inspection, one young person suggested an improvement would be to have some colourful or patterned wallpaper in her bedroom and this was shared with the registered persons. As a result of action taken following the previous inspection, the computer suite and games rooms are now unlocked and accessible for young people to use.

Young people who are new to the home are welcomed and helped to settle in. For example one young person was provided with their favourite meal of jelly and ice cream on their first night. Young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms and do so with beloved soft toys, books, bedding and pictures.

Feedback from staff, placing authorities, families and young people consulted during the inspection indicate that some young people are making progress. Examples include some young people being able to talk about their feelings at an early stage before they become anxious or upset. Other young people are now routinely going to school when previously they had extended periods of non-

attendance. One young person was pleased that, since coming to the home, she no longer smokes or takes illegal substances. Another young person has reduced self-harming behaviours.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Inadequate
Young people's welfare is not safeguarded and there are serious failures in the management of child protection. Since the previous inspection, the registered persons have failed to deal with all disclosures and allegations young people have made in line with child protection policies. There have been three new child protection concerns, in addition to the two that arose during the previous inspection, that demonstrate that young people's welfare is not always at the centre of decisions. Failings include: social workers not always being informed of disclosures; action being taken to investigate concerns prior to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) advising this and young people's views not always being sought independently of the home. When the young people's disclosures are not related to the home, the senior staff generally manage these appropriately. Bedroom door alarms continue to be used for the majority of young people and are routinely turned on at 9pm, a weakness identified at the previous inspection. The registered persons' subsequent review of the alarms has not been based on a full assessment of the risks that young people face. Neither have the registered persons identified less restrictive alternatives to the use of door alarms. As a result, the liberty of young people who do not need this level of surveillance is restricted. The registered persons have not ensured that suitable records are maintained of all visitors to each of the seven residences, resulting in young people not being safeguarded. Records documenting the use of a restraint fail to recount in detail what happened. In particular, reports do not confirm that staff have spoken with a young person to explain how they will be restrained and when it will be stopped. It is not clear that every time a young person witnesses the restraint of another young person that they are able to talk through their feelings about this with a member of staff. During the inspection, one young person said, 'it is quite nasty seeing your friends held'. A copy of the actual restraint record is not routinely sent to all placing	

authorities to enable them to have effective oversight of the actual incident.

Action has been taken to remedy some of the weaknesses in restraint practice identified at the previous inspection. The use of face-down ground holds has been removed and staff are clear that restraint should only be used as a last resort. Young people who have been restrained are now able to talk to an adult who was not involved. Some staff have received additional training to help them to de-escalate young people's behaviour to avoid the use of restraint. In addition, meetings are taking place to help staff to reflect on incidents and identify ways to reduce using restraint. The use of restraint is higher during the school day than in the residences.

Staff search for young people who go missing from the home. Liaison with the police is appropriate and attempts are made by staff to support young people to return safely and quickly. Prior to the inspection, senior managers were not ensuring that young people receive a return home interview from a person who is independent of the home. As a result, there is little opportunity to explore independently the reasons why a young person has gone missing and to learn from this in order to prevent a re-occurrence. The home's policy has now been amended.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate
The registered persons do not have effective oversight of the home and routine monitoring is not rigorous or challenging enough to identify breaches in regulations. As a result, senior managers do not have a full understanding of the home's strengths and weaknesses. Senior managers have failed to follow child protection procedures to safeguard young people. The registered persons have not prioritised the needs of young people and ensured that personalised care is always provided. Senior managers have not ensured that routine house rules in relation to bed times, the use of door alarms, application of safety levels, access to community groups, moving homes in the holidays and access to private facilities to contact others are based around young people's individual needs and capabilities. The independent visitor has an established history and involvement with the school	

and home, having previously been the head teacher. The independent visitor has not taken sufficient action to question the application of routine house rules. His monthly monitoring has not been rigorous enough to determine that staff effectively safeguard young people and that the conduct of the home promotes their well-being in line with the Children's Home Regulations, 2015. In addition, the registered persons have not ensured that the independent visitor consults with those who have parental responsibility to ascertain their views of the quality of care provided to young people.

Staff speak positively about the support they receive from each other and senior managers. Supervision takes place regularly and opportunities for more in-depth sessions with the therapy team are available. Despite these opportunities, insufficient reflective discussions have taken place to challenge the rigid implementation of the routines and house rules in some of the residences. Staff have received additional training and support to help them reduce the use of restraint since the previous inspection.

Placement plans maintained about young people are generally detailed and informative. Good information is obtained about young people's histories and their needs which help staff to make the right admission decisions.

The registered persons have consulted with families and placing authorities since the previous inspection. Information has been shared with them and young people about the previous inspection and action the registered persons are taking to deal with the previous requirements. Families' views on the quality of care young people receive have been sought as have their suggestions for further improvements. Opportunities for young people to talk with staff in the home have now increased. House meetings are now more frequent and young people can request and have individual meetings with senior managers.

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 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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