

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	19/01/2016
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	Jennifer Reed Nicola Lownds Sarah Canto

Inspection date	19/01/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Inadequate
Enforcement action since last inspection	Two compliance notices were issued on 26 October 2015. A monitoring visit took place on 23 November 2015 and the requirements of both compliance notices had been met.
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC030367

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- The home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for the young people.
- At their own request, young people frequently move between houses. There is no clear evaluation of whether this exercising of choice is in the young person's best interests.
- Monitoring, reviewing and reporting systems lack rigour. Shortfalls in the home environment, care practices and records are not always identified and/or evaluated to show their impact on the welfare and experiences of young people. These failings reduce the registered person's ability to identify areas of strength and weakness in the home's operation. Consequently, action to improve the quality of care provided to the young people is not as effective as it could be.
- Communication with the regulator is ineffective because of inaccuracies, delay, a lack of detail and ambiguous wording within notifications, the home's records and correspondence. This impedes the manager's ability to monitor practice. It is also a barrier to rigorous and independent assessment of practice.
- Records of complaints neither show the action taken in response to the complaint nor the outcome of any investigation. This limits the capacity to learn from the complaint and to improve outcomes for the young people.
- The practice of only one member of staff administering 'lower level' medication to young people increases the likelihood of harm because it does not allow for double-checking for errors in dosage.
- Some of the houses provide an impersonal environment; communal areas of the home do not display any pictures or achievements of the young people who live there. The locking of some resources including the larder diminishes a feeling of a homely atmosphere.

The children's home strengths

- Young people feel safe; improvements to care practice contribute to this. Staff manage and deal with child protection issues in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols and procedures.
- A multi-disciplinary school approach to the provision of individualised care for young people results in effective risk assessment and planning. This keeps young people safe and helps them to do well.
- Good access to the home's therapeutic services supports young people's well-being, promoting their development and enabling achievement.
- Young people enjoy living in their home and participating in activities and clubs within the local community.
- The registered persons listen to young people's views and take action to improve the quality of care provided by the home.

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
13: The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must (2)(e) ensure that the home's workforce provides continuity of care for each child; (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvement in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13(2)(e)(h))	31/03/2016
23: Medicines The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children's home. (2) In particular the registered person must ensure that – (b) medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child; and (c) a record is kept of the administration of medicine to each child. (Regulation 23(1)(2)(a)(b))	31/03/16
39: Complaints and representations The registered person must ensure that a record is made of any complaint, the action taken in response, and the outcome of any investigation (Regulation 39(3))	31/03/2016
40: Notification of a serious event The registered person must include, in any notification made under this regulation, details of the matter, and any actions taken by the registered person as a result of this matter. (Regulation 40(5)(a)(i & iii))	31/03/2016

Recommendations

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

- For children's homes to be nurturing and supportive environments that meet the needs of children, homes should seek as far as possible to maintain a domestic rather than 'institutional' impression (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- Any individual appointed to carry out visits to the home as an independent person must make a rigorous and impartial assessment of the home's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the home's care; in particular, the visitor's reports should include sufficient detail and evaluation of all matters reported upon. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 65, paragraph 15.5)

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
14/10/2015	Full	Inadequate
21/07/2015	Full	Inadequate
30/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/12/2014	Full	Good
25/03/2014	Interim	Satisfactory Progress
05/11/2013	Full	Good
26/03/2013	Interim	Good Progress
10/09/2012	Full	Good
11/01/2012	Interim	Good Progress
03/08/2011	Full	Outstanding
02/12/2010	Full	Outstanding
24/06/2010	Interim	Outstanding
27/01/2010	Full	Outstanding
02/07/2009	Interim	Good
04/03/2009	Full	Good
28/08/2008	Interim	Outstanding
27/03/2008	Interim	Outstanding
14/12/2007	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
The home is not yet delivering good help and care for young people to fully support their progress and experiences. However, there are no serious failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded and promoted. At their own request, young people frequently move between houses. They usually ask to move as a result of reporting difficulties with a particular member of staff or other young people who live in their home. Some young people have moved houses several times since the exercise of choice has been introduced. However clear evaluation of whether the moves are in the best interests of the young people is lacking. Communal areas of the houses are not sufficiently homely. Most rooms are painted in neutral colours, with few photographs of the young people and little evidence of their art and craft work on display. There is little indication of who lives in each house, reducing the young peoples' experience of involvement and ownership of their home. Restricted access to locked larders and televisions, lunches served by a member of staff wearing blue plastic gloves, and external bars fitted to windows in one house are not conducive to a family home environment. Action has been taken removing the window bars but progress is slow due to the building being listed. The young people know how to make a complaint or raise their concerns with their social workers or advocates. However, when the young people make a complaint, they neither receive a letter nor any written information telling them about what action has been taken to look into their concern, and what is the outcome of any investigation. Since the last inspection, there have been a number of significant improvements in the quality of care provided to the young people. They are very positive about these changes and say they are happy living in their home. Their comments include, 'It is crazy, hectic, but lovable', and, 'I don't ever want to leave this house because I love living here so much'. Young people expressed their delight with their individualised bedtimes, the removal of door alarms for most young people, having personal safety plans instead of the previous safety levels, the provision of a television in each house, and being able to access telephones and make private calls and email others if this	

is safe for them to do. Most of all, the young people enjoy taking part in activities and joining clubs in the local community. Individuals are going to youth club, martial arts and swimming clubs; they also attend dance classes, go horse-riding and join football teams.

Staff give careful consideration and take action to make sure the young people are sufficiently protected. Many matters are considered serious enough to refer to the local safeguarding team and to notify placing authorities and Ofsted. However, the quality of recording of these matters is not consistent. In practice, robust risk-assessment and good planning by the staff protects the young people the home looks after.

Young people benefit from the availability of a range of therapists within the school providing good help and support that effectively promote their welfare and development. Therapeutic plans with clear measurable objectives are used effectively to track young people's rate of progress. The use of creative goals and objectives within therapeutic plans helps young people to reflect on their emotional issues, while developing their skills and talents. These include, for example, integrating music therapy and playing musical instruments, and encouraging young people to eat a healthy diet through helping them to develop their cooking skills.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
There are no serious failures that lead to the young people being harmed, or at risk of harm. The welfare of the young people is safeguarded and promoted. However, the home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for them. The quality of safeguarding records and notification reporting is variable. Some documents are well written while others are not; they lack sufficient detail and the 'telling of the story' is incomplete. Staff sometimes use inexact language in their reporting, resulting in unclear and inaccurate records that do not fully explain what has actually occurred in a young person's life. Thus, external agencies and placing social workers are unable to gain a fully-informed view of significant events and make an assessment about the standard of care provided to the young people. Poor recording reduces the effective monitoring of the home's care practices and the external scrutiny of child protection issues. The sharing of written safeguarding information amongst the staff team to ensure the protection of the young people is inconsistent. For example, when a	

safeguarding issue arises, the notes made by senior staff dealing with the matter are not always promptly written up and entered into the home's records. This delay in providing rapid and clear safeguarding information to the staff that look after the young people has the potential to place those young people at possible risk of harm during this interim period.

Records of safeguarding incidents entered on the home's database are not easily accessible to all staff. Some members of staff are not clear about where to find particular safeguarding information within the home's systems. Leaders are aware of this shortfall and new recording formats are being introduced into all the houses to provide readily available information to all staff.

The quality of complaints' recording is poor. Records kept do not show that concerns raised by the young people have been thoroughly investigated. The outcomes from any investigation are not identified. Following a complaint investigation, records do not show what action has been taken, if required, to ensure the young people are kept safe and well.

There have been two errors in giving medication to young people since the previous inspection. The manager has undertaken a medication audit to review how medication is administered to the young people, and recommendations have been made that are intended to bring about improvement in practice. However, insufficient consideration has been given to the possibility of 'human error' in dispensing medication. Only one member of staff is required to check prescriptions for administering medication considered to be 'low level'. This practice prevents sufficient oversight to eliminate future mistakes.

Staff deal with child protection issues in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols and procedures. The management of allegations against staff is robust. Since the last inspection, the leadership team has commissioned a safeguarding audit; this has been completed by an external consultant to inform the development of the home's practice. The responsible individual reports that a suitably qualified and experienced safeguarding consultant will also commence independent monthly monitoring visits.

Thorough risk assessments, and the implementation of detailed placement plans, including health and education plans and safety plans, underpin the help and protection provided to the young people.

Young people's access to the school's therapeutic support services helps to safeguard their emotional and physical well-being. Staff and young people build positive relationships and these enable the young people to accept help and support. The young people are able to identify particular staff members with whom they trust enough to share their worries and concerns. One young person said, 'I feel safe and happy here'.

Managers are supporting staff effectively to respond better to young people's challenging behaviour. This has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of restraints undertaken since the previous inspection.

The number of young people going missing is low. Sound care practices secure the swift and safe return of the young people to their home. Staff make every effort to arrange return interviews for the young people with someone outside of the home, to gain a better understanding of the reasons why they went missing and to take any necessary measures to prevent further episodes.

Visitors' books are kept in each house to monitor visitors coming into the home, contributing to protecting the young people. Recent changes enable the young people to privately use the home's telephones and email their family, social worker, advocate or a helpline should they wish to raise any concern about their care with someone outside of their home.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
Monitoring systems continue to lack rigour, despite leaders and managers having taken substantial steps to improve the reviewing of the home's operation and care practices. Monitoring processes remain ineffective in identifying shortfalls in the quality of recording and notification, complaints processes and the home's premises. As a result, leaders and managers have an inaccurate view of the home's strengths and weaknesses. This reduces their ability to take action to improve the quality of care and services. The management of complaints is weak; leaders and managers do not take robust action to deal with complaints made about the home. Management information held about the number of complaints received is inaccurate and the quality of complaint recording is poor. The young people's level of satisfaction with the outcome of their complaint is not recorded. It is unclear how leaders and managers use any learning gathered from the complaints process to improve the experiences and care of the young people. Notifications of significant events in the young peoples' lives are made to the relevant agencies, but the quality of information within these notifications is often unclear or incomplete and reduces the effective, external scrutiny of care practice. On at least one occasion, significant information was not promptly shared with the	

placing authority social worker, restricting their ability to swiftly consider their duty of care for that young person. Monitoring processes have not identified the shortfalls within written notifications.

The independent visitor's monthly monitoring visits and reports lack sufficient rigour, detail and evaluation of observations and findings. For example, the visitor wrote, 'I checked the records of complaints; there were none recorded in November 2015'. The visitor has failed to identify areas requiring improvement relating to the premises. Reports do not clearly show how the visitor follows up good practice recommendations made at their previous visit to check implementation and improvement. The registered persons do not comment or sign against the report as evidence of their review of it, or identify any action they have taken in response to the recommendations for improvement made.

A significant number of the young people have requested to move to another house, usually in response to a difficulty they have experienced with other young people or with staff members. One young person reported that they had moved between houses four times. Sometimes, after a period of reflection, the young people ask to move back to their original home. Although managers record the moves that the young people make between the houses, insufficient data is recorded to effectively monitor the impact of these moves on the progress and welfare of the young people concerned. Records do not show a robust evaluation of the impact on the young people of placement disruption and the discontinuity of staffing and attachments, and whether the decision made to move the young person, was in their best interests.

The registered persons have written a robust action plan and taken steps to comply with the requirements made at the previous inspection, to meet four Quality Standards and five of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. The registered persons have satisfactorily remedied these breaches of regulation, apart from the Leadership and Management standard relating to monitoring practice, which remains unsatisfactory. The registered persons have tried to meet this Quality Standard. Multi-disciplinary and senior leadership meetings have been put in place to provide increased management oversight and review of the quality of care provided to the young people. Consideration is given to their rate of progress, how best staff can meet their individual and/or complex needs and their individual achievements and outcomes.

The leadership of the home has been strengthened by the development of a senior staff team which has defined accountabilities and responsibilities for leading specific practice areas. Senior staff show a good understanding of the plans for individual young people and know how well each young person is doing. The responsible individual is reviewing the current management structure of the home to ensure continuous improvement.

The independent visitor's reporting shows improvement in some areas of their monitoring of the home's processes and review of the quality of care provided to the young people. The visitor now contacts parents and placing authorities to seek their views about young people's care. Reports include an analysis of statistics related to practice.

A number of changes in practice have been made since the previous inspection to improve the experiences and care of the young people. Staff are positive about these changes and individual members of staff hold the view that care practices are improving and benefiting the young people looked after. A member of staff said, 'We are parenting now, not preventing'. Senior staff are effectively supporting the staff team to develop their skills and help them better manage young people's challenging behaviour.

Leaders and managers have successfully worked with the local community to support the young people to use local leisure facilities and develop their sense of belonging.

Staff work positively with placing authorities and families to secure good outcomes for the young people they look after. Staff keep parents informed about their child's welfare and progress.

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 evaluated 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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