

## **Children's homes inspection – Full**

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|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>11/10/2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC030439</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Full</b>            |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Stephen Mullins</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Paul Clark</b>      |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>11/10/2016</b>              |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Sustained effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                    |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                                |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                    |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                                |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                    |

## SC030439

### Summary of findings

#### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people make good behavioural and educational progress.
- Young people form good relationships with staff and enjoy staying at the home.
- Staff have been well trained and have developed skills in effective communication with those young people who have limited verbal abilities.
- Risk assessments give clear guidance to staff on keeping young people safe.
- Young people do not go missing, and young people's behaviour is well managed by staff.
- The manager effectively monitors the quality of care and makes ongoing improvements to the service.
- Staff are well trained and supervised and feel well supported.
- The manager and staff have good and effective relationships with parents, social workers, schools and other professionals.
- The manager and staff need to be more aware of how the pupil premium is used to support young people's education.
- The manager and staff need to improve young people's computer and internet access for education purposes.

## **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 recommendations:

- Ensure that children have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why the access would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it could support the child to access the computer and the internet safely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 29, paragraph 5.19)
- Ensure that the necessary support is given to children to enable them to access their education or training. Specifically, ensure that the home knows how the pupil premium is being spent to support a young person's education. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.13)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is registered as a children's home, providing full-time care and short breaks for up to six children and young people, irrespective of gender, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, or learning difficulties.

The home is owned and managed by a local authority, and the majority of the children accommodated are from the local area.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement      |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 29/02/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness   |
| 17/11/2015      | Full            | Good                      |
| 05/02/2015      | Interim         | Declined in effectiveness |
| 16/09/2014      | Full            | Adequate                  |

## Inspection judgements

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| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the impact of the staff and the individualised care provided enrich young people's experiences;</li> <li>– young people make good behavioural and educational progress;</li> <li>– young people form good relationships with staff and enjoy attending the home; and</li> <li>– staff have been trained, and have developed skills in effective communication with young people who have limited verbal abilities.</li> </ul> <p>The home produces clearly written placement plans for young people when a short break is being considered. This is done in conjunction with social workers, schools, families and other relevant professionals and may include a home visit. The plans clearly assess the young person's needs and include effective risk assessments. These plans are regularly reviewed. This means that the home is able to provide care tailored to the young person's specific needs.</p> <p>Young people make good progress while in the home. One parent commented, 'He's so different from how he was socially. He used to break things, and his behaviour was very difficult to manage.' A placing authority social worker said, 'His mother is really pleased with the progress that the home has made with him. He is now able to make his bed and tidy up, which he could never do before.'</p> <p>The home works in close partnership with parents, schools and educationalists. The home has developed good communication systems that support young people, and, as a result, young people make educational progress. One social worker commented, '... the home works really well in partnership with his school.' Young people's educational progress could be improved by their having more access to computers, and the home being more aware of how the pupil premium is being used to support the education of young people looked after.</p> <p>The local authority has developed a communication system specifically for young people who have learning disabilities and who have limited verbal ability. All staff have been trained in this method of communication, and this allows young people to make choices about their personal care, food, clothing and activities. This enhances young people's experience of living in the home. One parent commented, 'He enjoys it there, and they do all the things that he likes doing.' One social worker for a different young person told the inspector, 'He is comfortable there,</p> |                 |

and his mum says he enjoys going to the home and looks forward to it.'

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| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The way that children and young people are helped and protected is good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– individualised and general risk assessments are in place, which give clear guidance to staff on keeping young people safe;</li> <li>– sufficient staffing levels and secure systems are in place, which ensure that young people do not go missing;</li> <li>– young people's behaviour is well managed by staff who have been trained in safe methods of restraint;</li> <li>– the number of restraints applied is comparatively low, and these are well recorded and staff properly debriefed;</li> <li>– careful attention is paid to the safety of the living environment; and</li> <li>– staff are carefully selected and vetted on a regular and ongoing basis.</li> </ul> <p>As previously stated, placement planning includes identifying the risks that young people may present, or be subject to. These are regularly reviewed. This guides and informs staff on the best ways to keep an individual young person safe. Additionally, general risk assessments make staff aware of the risks to young people in the home. A locality risk assessment is in place, and this is reviewed annually. Health and safety checks of the premises are routinely carried out, and fire safety measures are appropriate. All of these items help to keep young people safe.</p> <p>Staffing levels are such that young people are constantly supervised, but they are kept secure and safe without that supervision being obtrusive. This is both inside the home and during outside activities in the community. The risk assessments in this regard are constantly being reviewed by the manager, and this ensures that this level of supervision is not overly restrictive of liberty.</p> <p>Effective behaviour management systems are in place. All staff have been trained in safe methods of restraint. The number of physical restraints is relatively low, compared to homes of the same size and client group. Each incident is properly recorded, and staff are de-briefed. This reduces the likelihood of restraint being</p> |                 |

necessary in the future. The home does not use sanctions because the registered manager deems this inappropriate for this client group. Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. One mother commented, 'He's doing really well here. He loves the home and he loves the staff.'

Staff personnel files indicate that staff working with the young people and all staff working in the home are carefully selected and vetted. This helps to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children and young people or to place them at risk.

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| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The impact and effectiveness of the leaders and managers of this home are good because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the manager is appropriately qualified and experienced;</li> <li>– there are systems in place which monitor the quality of care effectively and which make ongoing improvements to the service;</li> <li>– staff are well trained and supervised and feel well supported;</li> <li>– young people make progress in relation to their starting points;</li> <li>– the statement of purpose and children's guide are clearly written and effectively reviewed;</li> <li>– the leadership has good and effective relationships with parents, social workers, schools and health professionals;</li> <li>– the regulatory body is notified about all significant events occurring in the home; and</li> <li>– the manager has put, or is putting, into effect the recommendations of the previous inspection report.</li> </ul> <p>An independent visitor conducts monthly visits to the home and reports on their findings and includes the making of recommendations to improve service provision. These reports are sent to the regulatory body and are comprehensive and rigorous. The recommendations made in these reports are put into effect by the manager. The manager produces a review of the quality of care every six months, and this review includes the views of young people when possible, and of their parents, social workers, teachers and health professionals. The shortfalls identified in the last review have been acted on.</p> |                 |



Staffing levels are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people living in the home. Staff said that they feel well managed, trained and supervised. Staff are inducted well in all of the core areas of their roles. There is ongoing training in all of the key areas of practice, which include safeguarding children, the use of physical restraint and communication skills with young people who have limited verbal ability. This training is regularly updated. The majority of staff have the appropriate qualification for their roles or are undertaking this. All staff undertake an annual appraisal, which identifies their training and development needs. All staff have monthly supervision, and there are monthly team meetings. Key workers demonstrate a high level of knowledge of the individual young person that they have a responsibility for, and all key workers meet monthly to share information about the young people living in the home. This means that young people receive good-quality care from workers who know about their needs and how these are to be met, and who are well trained and supervised.

Young people make good progress in relation to their starting points. A professional commented on the quality of care, 'A really good standard of care is provided by this home. They also support his mother well.' A social worker commented, 'The home works really well in partnership with his school.' The proactive and positive work with other agencies gives young people the best possible all-round care and support.

The statement of purpose clearly and accurately describes the function and aims and objectives of the home. The children's guide is in symbol format, and key workers go through the guide with young people to aid understanding.

The manager notifies the regulatory body of all significant events, as required by regulation. The manager has implemented, or is putting into effect, the recommendations made at the previous inspection:

- young people now have memory boxes, which help them to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living in the home and help to record significant life events;
- the home is in the process of redecoration, in a manner which provides a homely and domestic environment;
- the limitation of access to parts of the home to young people is now subject to rigorous assessment;
- the provision of computer and internet support is currently being costed.

The latter remains a recommendation until this is fully implemented.

## 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 children looked after 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 that 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 that 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 whom 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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