

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC030439
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Somerset County Council
Registered person address	County Hall, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4DY

Responsible individual	Robert Eveleigh
Registered manager	Stephen Mullins
Inspector	Janice Hawtin

Inspection date	03/03/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has Sustained effectiveness. The manager and staff team continue to provide a home in which children feel safe and make sustained progress. Feedback from parents and professional stakeholders remains positive. A parent commented 'I was very apprehensive about leaving my son anywhere, but he runs into the home as though he lives there and then he tells me to go and leave him. He loves the trampoline and the exercise bike. This is the only social time he spends with peers'. Since the previous inspection several changes have been made to improve the progress and experiences of children. Planning and handover of information between staff going off and coming on shift now includes a fixed agenda. Shift changeovers are focused on sharing information and providing an update about children. They now also include planning of activities, discussions about meeting development targets and aims of the placement. Children's records have been reviewed and a new recording system has been devised. While some of these records have yet to be fully implemented in practice for each child, the system is fully developed and available. A team leader is spending time with each child's keyworker to provide some consistency in recording and to ensure that any information included in the plans is meaningful and accurate. Each child will have a summary care plan that includes routines, behaviour management strategies and development targets. Plans will be updated frequently (daily where possible) to evidence progress and make amendments to targets that are achieved. This new recording process is much clearer, provides the information staff need, and details evidence of the value spending time in this home is adding to the lives of children. The managers monitoring of the home contributes to ensuring the quality of the care provided and identifies areas for further development. Alongside a detailed annual development plan the managers maintain a 'live working document plan' kept on a white board in the office. It details the plans for the current and following month and describes who is responsible for carrying them out. This plan serves as a constant reminder to staff of their development responsibilities	

avoiding unnecessary delays in implementing changes. Copies of the managers monitoring reports have now been provided to Ofsted as required.

The use of physical interventions to manage behaviour remains mostly limited to the use of breakaway techniques and or, gentle guides to avoid incidents. The manager is now a certified instructor for the physical intervention techniques used in this home. He is able to train the staff and offer guidance and advice about physical interventions. Children are safer when the staff are well trained and the use of restraint is avoided.

The manager's reflection of incidents that occur includes a significant analysis of what happened. Any learning from this oversight is then discussed and added to children's behaviour management strategies. This improves the care provided to children adding to understanding and responding effectively to their frustrations and behaviour.

The manager, team leaders and staff have focused their improvements on those areas which have most impact on the welfare and experiences of children. As a result, several recommendations set at the previous inspection need additional attention. Some recommendations have been repeated to enable them to be fully resolved.

While each child now has a personalised memory box the contents are variable. Some children have photographs and other memorabilia, others have very little or nothing. A member of staff has recently been tasked with collecting photographs to make sure all children will have a history of their time spent at the home.

Locked doors remain in place in parts of the building and it is not clear if doors to the safe outside areas remain locked without good reason. The issue was discussed at a staff meeting and agreed that some children need an element of control because they lack understanding of danger. However, assessment and monitoring of this issue is not yet in place and it is likely some children's access is restricted without good reason.

Children's lack of access to the internet remains a concern. The manager has explored several options and it is felt a resolve is imminent. Agreement for the additional expenditure is being sought from the local authority who is responsible for this home.

Since the previous inspection the home has been decorated throughout. Improvements to make the accommodation more cosy and homely is a work in progress. There is still some way to go with soft furnishing, fittings and personalisation of bedrooms for those who visit for short breaks. The two children who live in the home do benefit from having a cosy, homely and personalised space.

Information about this children's home

The home is registered as a Children's Homes providing full time care and short breaks for children with physical and 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
17/11/2015	CH - Full	Good
05/02/2015	CH - Interim	declined in effectiveness
16/09/2014	CH - Full	Adequate
10/03/2014	CH - Interim	Satisfactory Progress

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff support and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help and record significant life events. (The guide to quality standards and page 62 paragraph 14.5)
- Ensure children have access to a computer and Internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why access would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access the computer and the Internet safely. (The guide to quality standards page 29 paragraph 5.19)
- Ensure staff provide a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of the children, this will, in most cases, be a homely and domestic environment. In particular, ensure that young people spending time in the home on a short breaks basis have personalised and cosy bedrooms where possible. (The guide to the quality standards page 15 paragraph 3.9)
- Ensure that any decision to limit children's access to all parts of the home is only made where this is intended to safeguard children's welfare. Any decision to limit access should be informed by rigorous assessment of that individual child's needs, be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. (The guide to the quality standards page 15 paragraph 3.10)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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