

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC030677
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sara King
Inspector	Amanda Maxwell

Inspection date	21 June 2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC030677

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people have made good progress from their initial starting points since arriving at the home.
- Young people attend the home for short breaks. Parents and carers report that their children have an enjoyable time while at the home.
- Young people attend and engage in education. All young people make progress within their individual capabilities. Staff have good relationships with school, promoting a consistency of approach used to support young people.
- The skilled and knowledgeable staff follow specific plans to support young people which address their complex health needs.
- Staff offer a wide variety of stimulating activities, which enable young people to explore and try new opportunities and experiences.
- Staff use a wide selection of communication aids to engage young people with their care routines.
- Staff treat young people with dignity and respect and have good insight into their individual needs. Staff are caring and consistent in their approach.
- Young people are encouraged and enabled to communicate their worries and concerns. Staff are creative about how they gain their views.
- Young people are supported to learn and develop life, personal and social skills which promote opportunities for independence into adulthood.
- Managers have effective and informative systems for reviewing and monitoring behaviour patterns.
- Staff have open and honest relationships with parents and carers. Regular effective communication ensures that all are aware and up to date regarding needs.

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:

- Children must be consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvements in the quality of care provided. Due consideration should be given to the child's cognitive ability in the development and implementation of any consultation processes. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11).
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).
- Staff skills for safeguarding should include being able to identify signs that children may be at risk, and support children in strategies to manage and reduce any risks. Staff should encourage children to express their views about whether they feel safe, both within and outside the home. Staff should support children to understand how to ask for help to stay safe and that the home is an environment which supports this ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43, paragraph 9.10).
- As set out in regulations 31-33, the registered person is responsible for maintaining good employment practice. They must ensure that recruitment, supervision and performance management of staff safeguards children and minimises potential risks ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is owned and run by the local authority. It provides short breaks to children and young people with physical and/or learning disabilities. The home is registered to provide care for up to six children and young people.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
20 October 2015	Full	Good
17 March 2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
18 November 2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people attend the home for short breaks or as part of a planned package of support. They are making good progress from their starting points and are acquiring skills while having new and enjoyable experiences. Young people have positive relationships with staff, whom they can trust and confide in. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable about the young people in their care. Staff treat each child and young person with dignity and respect. They are caring in their approach, showing a real interest in each young person. Staff were observed 'catching up' with young people on their news on their return to the home. Staff support young people to communicate their needs through the use of a variety of aids. Staff are skilled in communicating with young people who cannot communicate their daily needs to others. Staff use photographs, signs, gestures and objects of reference which support young people's communication. Staff communicate all information and details about the home to young people in a variety of formats. Information includes the home's complaints procedure, its routines, activities available and which staff are on shift. Young people are aware of how to make a complaint and raise a concern with staff. Staff are skilled and have good knowledge and understanding of those in their care. Staff are alert to changes in a young person's behaviour or presentation. Staff tune in to the needs of young people by quickly recognising key gestures and known forms of communication, and then act accordingly. All young people are engaged in education, with staff supporting and promoting attendance during their stay at the home. Staff facilitate transitions from one location to another, and completing communication books aids information sharing. Staff have good relationships with education providers and attend meetings and reviews when required. Plans in the home mirror and reflect the strategies and methods of approach used in other familiar settings. This provides consistency of approach and young people are reassured due to the familiarity of routines. Plans are detailed and individualised to meet all aspects of a young person's care, including detailed	

information about dietary, communication and mobility needs. Staff set targets for the young people, but these are not routinely and consistently reviewed.

Staff provide a varied programme of activities for the young people, aiming for each stay to be exciting and a holiday-style trip from their normal routines. Staff provide stimulating activities, with regular trips out to the local area and places of interest. The home also has a wide range of activities available on site, including a sensory room and large outside activity playground. Staff offer young people choice and known, liked activities.

Young people are supported to develop their personal, life and social skills. Older young people follow a programme to develop skills, which promote their independence and prepare them for their transition into adulthood. They access public transport, develop money skills and prepare a simple meal.

Young people are all encouraged to develop their personal, life and social skills. Those who are able to are encouraged to assist staff with basic domestic tasks, such as putting on a pillow case. Staff encourage all young people to sit together at mealtimes and to eat together.

Plans detail children's and young people's health needs and what is required to meet those needs. Staff have practical information to follow in the case of an emergency. There are protocols in place for those requiring specific actions and medications if their health deteriorates.

Young people are welcomed to the home. Staff provide support to young people in their own homes and so initial relationships are developed prior to admission. Staff promote positive moves to the home through well-planned transitions. Day and overnight visits enable young people to transition positively into the home.

Young people are supported to develop relationships with peers. Staff support young people to develop their resilience levels to things that they find difficult, for example coping with noise. Staff encourage young people to play alongside each other and to interact in social situations.

Staff have facilitated house meetings, with young people sharing their views about the home. They have made decisions about key aspects of the home, such as decoration. However, these have not been regularly offered to young people.

Staff facilitate contact with family and friends, as per the plans and risk assessments in place. Staff raise concerns with professionals and request reviews, when required.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The home is safe with aspects of risk or damage swiftly identified and repaired. Staff are knowledgeable and insightful about how to keep young people safe. Young people share their concerns and worries with staff. Staff have good knowledge of risk factors and signs to be aware of and share concerns with others when required. Staff have detailed risk management plans to minimise risk. They provide clarity, with practical interventions and actions required by staff. Some plans vary in quality and have not been updated or reviewed to reflect all current risk factors. Staff have appropriately responded to and recorded accidents. All staff are first-aid trained, with many having additional levels of skill to meet specific emergency needs. Staff use additional equipment to support them in caring for young people, and all of the relevant assessments and plans detail how to complete these tasks and what is required to minimise risk. Staff have all received lifting and handling training to support them in these tasks. Staff report, record and refer concerns to others when needed. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures, with all concerns raised and recorded. The records do not detail actions and outcomes. There has been no review or monitoring applied to the records. The manager intends to review the systems in the home to address this. There have been no episodes of young people going missing from the home. Staff have policies and procedures to follow if this were to occur. Young people who present with a high risk of absconding have detailed risk management plans, which are reviewed and updated. Staff have effective working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The staff training has incorporated information provided by the board. No young people are known to have risks associated with child sexual exploitation. Behaviour support plans are present for some young people, providing a clear plan of distraction and de-escalation strategies. Staff use physical intervention as a last resort. Staff are trained in the home's preferred method of approach. Some young people require behaviour support plans. Staff have improved how they seek young people's views following an incident. They have been creative, using observation and description of young people's presentation to gain a better understanding of triggers. Staff keep detailed records of antecedents, behaviours and consequences	

with robust effective monitoring and evaluation. This has informed staff and others of triggers and required changes to behaviour support plans.

Staff report, record and refer concerns to others when needed. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policy and procedures, with all concerns raised and recorded. The records do not detail actions and outcomes. There has been no review or monitoring applied to the records. The manager intends to review the systems in the home to address this.

Staff have managed complaints effectively, with reporting, referral and investigation as required. They have provided outcomes to the complainant, and records show good recording and detail. Staff advocated for and supported a young person to make a complaint when they were unhappy regarding the service they received. No allegations have been made since the last inspection of the home.

Staff have good relationships with the local police, who have visited the home and met with young people. They have provided basic education to young people about 'How to Keep Safe' and 'Internet Safety'.

The home's systems for managing the environment are robust, with all key checks occurring as required.

Staff have good systems in place with regard to recruitment and safer recruitment although gaps in employment history have not been explored.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is well managed by an effective, qualified manager and team of staff. The home is fully staffed, with plans in place to address changes to personnel as they arise. The managers have effective systems for evaluating and monitoring the quality of care provided in the home. The manager uses a checklist to ensure that all areas are reviewed. Leaders and managers have not applied robust scrutiny to the monitoring of care plans. They have not amended and updated care plans and risk assessments to reflect known information and risk. Staff have detailed knowledge of young people's needs, but this is not reflected in all records.	

Staff receive a planned induction programme, including shadowing other staff, on-line training, face-to-face training and additional supervision sessions. Staff complete an induction booklet which supplements and evidences knowledge and practice through probation.

Staff receive regular, effective supervision and their practice is appraised annually.

Staff access a wide variety of training, supplementing their knowledge and practice. Staff are competent in specific aspects of personal care, including providing emergency medication and managing feeding equipment, lifting and handling. Staff have either completed the required qualification or are enrolled to do so.

Staff have sought feedback from those outside of the home to inform the home's development plan. It outlines areas that the manager wishes to develop and improve over the year, with each aspect having a target date set to achieve the goal. This plan will shortly be due for review.

Staff have good relationships with parents and families, with details of each stay forwarded to parents following a visit. Parents and staff have regular contact, discussing and sharing detail and information. Parents report having trust in those that care for their children. Managers have good relationships with those outside of the home. These include professionals, voluntary organisations and local businesses. These good relationships have benefited young people, through a multi-disciplinary approach to care planning and review.

The statement of purpose has been updated and reviewed. It reflects the aims, aspirations and ethos of the home.

The independent visitor provides a monthly report and the manager is swift to respond to the areas identified for improvement.

The recommendations identified at the previous inspection have been implemented and acted on.

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 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 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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