

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC031410
Inspector	Anna Williams
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	East Sussex County Council
Registered person address	County Hall St. Annes Crescent LEWES East Sussex BN7 1UE
Responsible individual	Elizabeth Rugg
Registered manager	Helen Denise Simmons
Date of last inspection	12/03/2014

Inspection date	30/07/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There has been no enforcement action since the last inspection.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	outstanding
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This children's home provides young people with outstanding outcomes and staff demonstrate excellent working practices. Overall, the home provides a good standard of care to young people both on a short break, and longer-term basis. Young people say they feel safe living in or coming to visit the home. Relationships between young people and staff are warm and positive. Feedback from parents and external professionals is highly complimentary of the care provided.

Areas of shortfall identified during this visit include deficiencies in sanctions and restraint record keeping. The current behaviour management policy does not guide staff in relation to clinical restraint, and there has been one such hold since the last inspection. The Statement of Purpose and children's guide do not currently reflect the revised use of the home to provide longer term care and provide less short breaks. The internal monitoring reports do not include robust evaluation of the quality of care, nor consultation with key people. Waking night staff do not receive the same level of regular individual supervision as other contracted staff.

The home has an experienced Registered Manager in post. There is a team development plan in place which identifies appropriate goals and targets to further enhance young people's outcomes.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This children's home is operated by the local authority. The service is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. It provides care for up to two young people under short break arrangements and a further five young people may live at the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/03/2014	Interim	good progress
19/08/2013	Full	outstanding
13/03/2013	Interim	good progress
11/12/2012	Full	outstanding

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
5 (2001)	keep under review and, where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose and the children's guide (Regulation 5 (a))	22/09/2014
17B (2001)	keep under review and where appropriate revise the behaviour management policy (Regulation 2 (a))	22/09/2014
17B (2001)	ensure a written record is made of the use of any measure of control, restraint or discipline, in a volume kept for the purpose of which shall include the matters listed within Regulation 17B (3) (a - i)	22/09/2014

	and (4) (a and b)	
34 (2001)	establish and maintain a system for monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 6 at least once in every 3 months; and improving the quality of care provided in the children's home; and the system shall provide for consultation with children accommodated in the home, their parents and placing social workers. (Regulation 34 (1) (a and b) (3))	22/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure the telephone verification of written references includes all written references received (NMS 16.1)
- ensure the overall number, competence and deployment of staff, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, can fulfil the home's statement of purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the home (NMS 17.1)
- ensure staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and purpose of the setting, training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the home (with specific reference to the Regulation 33 visitor) (NMS 18.1)
- ensure waking night staff are provided with regular supervision by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. (NMS 19.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Young people are very positive about their time living in or visiting the home. Comments from young people include 'the care I get here is great!', and 'It has been nice staying here. I play and have fun with staff'. Young people are extremely well supported to understand why they are living in the home, or are visiting for a short break. Equally, when young people leave, their time in the home is openly celebrated through cards, photograph albums and appropriate leaving gifts. This assists all the young people to have a good understanding of their unique circumstances.

Young people maintain healthy lifestyles and do not engage in any risk taking behaviours. Some young people have lost weight appropriately through changes in their diet. This weight loss supports their overall health plan and means they are engaging more in activities now. Some young people have achieved improved oral hygiene through making changes to how their teeth are cleaned. Other young people's individual hygiene and hair care routines have significantly developed. This benefits their personal cleanliness as well as their identity and self-esteem.

All the young people who live in the home have exceptional attendance and are making very good progress in all their educational establishments. A social worker comments 'Since my client moved to the home, the child's school has noticed how much happy and relaxed they have become'.

Young people are positively engaged with activities within their local community. All the young people engage actively in the wide variety of trips on offer. Some young people have had a holiday together with staff in another part of the country. This offers young people opportunities to try new experiences and explore different parts of the United Kingdom. A parent comments 'the holiday was an amazing experience for my child. There are some gorgeous photos of my child and all that they did when away. Really good memories for my child and me'. Some young people attend regular youth clubs, and outreach services. This offers regular chances for young people to make new friends outside of the home. Young people have taken part in activities locally such as visiting a steam railway, seaside walks, wooded nature walks, discovering castles and seeing animals on a farm. Some young people have been to see a West End stage show in London. This offers young people exceptional memorable experiences.

Young people maintain strong attachments to family and significant people in their lives. Contact arrangements are carefully planned with family members and friends. This ensures each contact visit has a positive focus. Visits are efficiently facilitated and supervised by the staff team if required. Family members who live far away are sent regular updates on young people's progress and achievements. Young people sustain appropriate friendships with peers who have left the home. This means all

young people benefit from well-planned contact with those people important to them.

Young people are well-supported towards independence taking into account their age and understanding. Some young people attend 'independence nights' where the focus is on learning life skills. During these nights, young people practice tasks such as cooking, making a bed and budgeting in a safe environment. As a result, young people are making good progress towards individual independence goals. Other young people are well-prepared for moves into adult placements or new short breaks settings through sensitive and well-planned transitions. This lessens young people's anxieties. Young people's progress towards adulthood is celebrated and well-documented through photographs and certificates of achievement.

Quality of care

outstanding

Relationships between staff and young people are extremely nurturing and positive. Feedback from external professionals is extremely favourable. A social worker comments 'the young person..... requires a high degree of support which has always been delivered conscientiously and effectively. This includes planning for [the young person's] future, which is underway'. Other comments from external professionals include 'friendly staff and good communication regarding children's needs', and 'the standard of care is very high. Key working is also excellent'.

Young people are supported to make their views and feelings known. Staff actively use communication aids consistently well with young people to ensure everyone has an opportunity to share their views, opinions and make choices. Recently young people have been involved in writing the application for, and successfully obtaining, two tablet computers for the home. Young people have then chosen which applications they wanted to purchase for the tablet computers. This demonstrates to young people that their wishes and feelings are taken into account and listened to.

Staff follow clear procedures relating to medication administration within the home. Systems in place are safe and effective. Staff have built excellent relationships with local health partners such as the specialist dental service and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. This benefits young people's physical and emotional well-being. Some staff have undertaken nutrition training, and as a result menus have been revised. This ensures all young people in the home are eating a well-balanced and closely monitored diet. In addition, some young people access specialist advice from a dietician in relation to their individual dietary needs. Overall, this very good practice ensures young people's personal health needs are clearly identified and fully met.

Staff actively and consistently support all the young people's educational achievements and attendance. Young people are supported to attend after-school clubs on a weekly basis. This furthers young people's learning and friendships. Diaries sent between the home and school ensure good communication is maintained

and the 24-hour curriculum is well-promoted.

Care planning documents are highly individualised to the young person's unique needs. Staff knowledge of young people's personal plans is excellent. Young people are supported to learn about the world and different cultures through celebrating major festivals and special events such as the football World Cup, and Chinese new year. Themed food nights and colourful wall displays are ways in which young people are directly and successfully involved in learning about diversity.

Young people receive outstanding support which offers them exceptionally varied activity choices and experiences. Staff support young people to safely access both off-site and in-house events. Young people benefit from the varied play equipment within the home's grounds, as well as indoor play materials such as music and arts and crafts. Staff also facilitate regular trips out to places such as the cinema, bowling, science centre, swimming and horse riding. The house tablet computers are popular to both play with, and learn from. All these opportunities offer all the young people an extensive range of additional experiences. A social worker comments 'this home do not see this child's disability as a barrier, they work hard to look at ways to enhance the child's quality of life'.

The home is located near to local amenities and is very well maintained. All young people's bedrooms are highly personalised. The home offers spacious and well-designed accommodation. The indoor and outdoor space is used creatively to offer young people choices of activities, quiet reflection, water play or communal shared space. Staff make excellent use of all the facilities thus ensure all young people have opportunity to share equipment and space. Good health and safety routines ensure the physical environment is kept safe for all who use the building.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people say they feel safe and identify adults they would talk to if they were worried. Parents report that they feel their children's safety is given a high priority. External professionals comment 'the communication is good and I am kept informed of what is happening in my client's daily life. The home are good at alerting me to any issues which might be affecting my client's well being'.

Basic recruitment practice meets regulatory requirements, but does not meet all the national minimum standards. Only one written reference is verified by telephone to ensure it is authentic. Other than this shortfall, recruitment practice is robust.

Use of sanctions within the home is low. Since the last inspection there have been none imposed. However, records show that previous sanctions have not been recorded clearly. For example, the actual sanction imposed, and the effectiveness of the sanction set is not consistently documented. This means the Registered Manager does not have the full information as required by regulation to evaluate each

sanction imposed.

There have been six restraints since the last inspection. One of these restraints was a 'clinical hold' in order to undertake a medical procedure on a young person. Currently the home's behaviour management policy does not include guidance for staff on the use of clinical restraint in the best interests of young people. This risks an inconsistent and inappropriate response from staff to such situations. Further to this, restraint records do not clearly record all the information as required by regulation. This hinders the Registered Manager's ability to monitor records and ensure the use of physical intervention is fair and proportionate.

There have been no significant events relating to the safeguarding of young people in the home since the last inspection. Staff spoken to demonstrate good awareness of safe working practices and procedures. High staffing levels ensure that all young people have close supervision. Young people do not identify bullying as an issue within the home. No young people have been reported missing since the last inspection.

Leadership and management

good

The Registered Manager has been in post at this children's home for the past 11 years. She holds relevant NVQ level 4 qualifications in childcare and leadership.

The home has been through a period of significant change since December 2013 when short break care within the home was reduced and a move to providing longer term care initiated. The Registered Manager has focused on the practicalities of supporting the young people, staff and parents through this change. However, the Statement of Purpose and children's guide have not been updated to reflect these significant changes. As a result, these documents do not accurately reflect the current aims and objectives of the home.

The majority of core staff members receive regular supervision on an individual basis which is of good quality, is child-focused and reflective. However, waking night staff do not receive supervision as frequently nor as individualised. This does not ensure a consistency of performance management to ensure high standards are maintained across all job roles.

External monitoring visits take place on a monthly basis and involves young people. The external visitor evaluates key documents such as the sanctions and restraints log. However, the visitor has not undertaken any specific training or focused learning about the use of restraint and linked regulatory requirements. This hinders their ability to suitably challenge and evaluate whether restraints and sanctions are safe, fair and proportionate.

The Registered Manager has extensive systems in place to quality assure key areas

across the home. These include audits of medication, care plans and activities. However, these audits do not form part of the Registered Manager's internal monitoring reports which are submitted to Ofsted. The reports submitted to Ofsted lack thorough evaluation and additionally do not contain consultation with young people, parents and social workers. This means the Registered Manager is not demonstrating in the internal reports that she is acting upon and learning from feedback to learn from and further develop the home.

Rotas worked demonstrate that there are a sufficient number of staff on each shift to meet the individual needs of young people placed. However, upon scrutiny the rotas show that on 18 shifts there have been only one or two contracted staff on the shift, who have been supported by up to five in-house relief staff and agency staff. This impacts on the skills balance on individual shifts, and risks affecting the quality of care provided, although this has not had a negative impact to date.

Young people are cared for by an experienced and well-skilled contracted staff team. 95% of staff hold the Diploma in childcare or an equivalent qualification. 5% of staff are actively completing the qualification currently. Since the last inspection, staff have completed training in safe caring courses which include Makaton communication, safeguarding and fire safety. This ensures the core staff team have relevant and up-to-date skills.

There were no requirements or recommendations set at the last inspection. Overall, the home has maintained outstanding outcomes for children and an outstanding quality of care. However, safeguarding arrangements and the leadership and management of the home have now been judged good. There is a residential improvement plan in place and progress towards specific targets is good. Examples of progress include staff attending bespoke autism training, and extending their knowledge base. Specific areas of the children's home have benefited from ongoing redecoration. This further enhances the environment. Young people have a child friendly version of the improvement plan. This details child centred goals such as 'help you to be as independent as you can', and 'make sure you can do activities you enjoy'. This means everyone in the home is clear about the aims and objectives for development.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.