

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

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>21/11/2016</b>           |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC033174</b>             |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Full</b>                 |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b>      |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Maria Calway-Kennedy</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>James Harmon</b>         |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>21/11/2016</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>Outstanding</b>             |

**SC033174**

**Summary of findings**

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

- The young people are kept safe and supported to make progress in their lives. The staff are teaching them about positive relationships.
- A thorough pre-placement process is undertaken for all newly admitted young people.
- Care planning is meticulous with management overview and the views of the young people contained throughout.
- Professional support is provided promptly for young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- A tremendous effort is undertaken by the staff to ensure that parents are involved and communicated with when possible.
- There is a good response when young people go missing from care.
- The staff have a calm approach when dealing with the negative behaviours of the young people.
- The leadership and management of the home is excellent, with an experienced manager in post. All previous requirements and recommendations have been met.
- External and internal monitoring of the service provided to the young people is effective and consistent.
- Not all young people receive appropriate alternative forms of learning when not enrolled in full-time education.

## 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 within the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Due date                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <p>8. The education standard</p> <p>'In order to meet the education standard the registered person is required to:</p> <p>(2)(a) the staff:</p> <p>(iv) help each child to understand the importance and value of education, learning, training and employment.</p> <p>(ix) help each child who is above compulsory school age to participate in further education, training, or employment and to prepare for future care; education or employment.</p> <p>(Regulation 8(2)(iv)(ix))</p> | <p>28 February 2017</p> |
| <p>11. The positive relationship standard</p> <p>'In order to meet the positive relationship standard, the registered person must ensure that children are helped to develop relationships based on:</p> <p>(1)(a) mutual respect and trust</p> <p>(b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour;</p> <p>(c) positive responses to other children and adults.</p> <p>(Regulation 11(1)(a)(b)(c))</p>                                                                                    | <p>28 February 2017</p> |

### Recommendations

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

- Case records must be kept up to date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', p. 62. 14.3)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

The home is a local authority children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 29/03/2016      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 10/11/2015      | Full            | Good                    |
| 12/03/2015      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 28/11/2014      | Full            | Good                    |

## 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 atmosphere within the home is slightly unsettled due to the majority of the young people being new. One has resided in the home less than a year and two residents were admitted three months ago. The staff are trying to encourage the young people to develop positive relationships despite acts of bullying and incidents of challenging behaviour in which they were verbally abusive and aggressive towards staff. The manager acknowledges that the young people are still finding their feet.</p> <p>The pre-admission processes are thorough, allowing the young people to be observed in previous placements and to spend time at the home before they are formally admitted. This process allows the staff to plan and ensure that the young people's needs are understood.</p> <p>Care planning for the young people is sound. A consultancy model is used which involves a psychologist working directly with the staff and providing a deeper insight into the young people's problems and support strategies tailored to their needs. Records contain the views of the young people and are maintained to a good standard. Individual files contain relevant information with comprehensive plans that are reviewed regularly. Detailed daily logs capture the lives of the young people and provide insight for all that work with them. However, not all records are signed and dated so the audit trail is not explicit.</p> <p>Creative methods are undertaken when the young people have difficulty understanding their care plan documentation. For example, a care plan presented as a drawing created an opportunity for a young person to become visually aware of her goals resulting in improved engagement.</p> <p>The staff are calm and patient in their approach when engaging with the young people. They listen to them and create further opportunities to develop their relationships. This was evident when a young person presented as disruptive and targeted certain members of staff on the last day of inspection. An independent reviewing officer reported that the young person is normally happy and has good engagement with the staff.</p> <p>The young person who is in full-time education has excellent attendance and good achievement. The staff routinely engage with school staff and attend meetings, often challenging decisions if they are not in the best interest of the young person. One young person recently attended a week-long school trip with staff successfully preparing her for the event.</p> |                 |

Three of the four young people placed in the home are not in formal education; only one receives 25 hours per week of alternative educational provision. The deficit for the other two is attributed to a number of reasons, such as young people being resistant to learning based upon their experiences historically or their behaviour in school. There are plans in place that have not yet been implemented to ensure that all young people have access to suitable education.

Complex medical needs of the young people are addressed through staff training and frequent consultation with specialists. This includes the reviewing of medication and providing young people with an understanding of their issues. Prompt referrals to child and adolescent mental health services allow appointments to be arranged for young people immediately.

Effective communication with parents by the staff allows them to be well informed and active in the care of their children. The staff are excellent at liaising with parents and creating opportunities for safe appropriate contact to take place that builds bridges and develops relationships. A parent will be spending this New Year's Eve at the home with a young person as arranged by the staff.

Staff encouraging the young people to participate in individual and group activities promotes confidence and positive peer interaction. The young people identify their interest and the staff do their best to find a programme. A young person is currently enjoying free running and snowboarding.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Judgement grade |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The staff are competent in the ability to keep the young people safe. The recently updated safeguarding policies and procedures, complete with informative flow charts, are accessible and offer guidance in all areas. The staff receive a broad range of safeguarding training to ensure that the young people are protected. Their training is up to date in the key areas of missing from care, radicalisation, internet safety, and child sexual exploitation and self-harm.</p> <p>Risk assessments are good, offering advice to staff on how to manage and eliminate risk for the young people along with the potential effectiveness of the actions taken. Staff are knowledgeable about the risks associated with the young people and routinely update their documentation with management overview of this. One young person's risk assessment was reviewed five times in two months.</p> <p>The impact risk assessment is completed prior to admitting young people. It is then</p> |                 |

reviewed on a monthly basis to see trends and patterns of the young people's behaviours over time. This has been a useful tool for developing strategies and monitoring the group dynamics of the home.

An emphasis is placed on the staff developing positive relationships with the young people while being sensitive to their needs to manage their behaviour successfully. Clear and reasonable behavioural expectations are set. The young people benefit from the opportunity of being provided space and time to reflect on their behaviour, often resulting in remorse for their actions. The practice was on display as a young person escalated his behaviour and staff managed the situation effectively with a sense of calm assurance.

Physical intervention is used as a last resort by staff. All incidents are documented and reviewed by management for learning. The staff receive excellent training in behaviour management and treat the young people with respect and dignity. The home previously had a high number of incidents pertaining to a young person that continued to go missing from care due to not adjusting to living away from home. The staff response on all occasions was noted as being proactive while working in partnership with the placing social worker, police and other professionals.

Staff have a very good relationship with the police, often consulting on matters relating to the young people. The local community officer regularly stops by the home, meets with the young people and supports restorative meetings when necessary.

The young people benefit from the home's thorough recruitment process. Four staff members have been appointed using safer recruitment practices, consisting of verifying references and double-checking backgrounds to ensure that they are of good character and intention.

The home is maintained to a good standard. Continual efforts are undertaken to keep the environment risk free. Health and safety checks are completed within acceptable intervals. Fire safety and other household checks are frequently conducted.

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Judgement grade    |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| The leadership and management is a substantial strength of the home. The registered manager is qualified, with many years of experience successfully managing the children's home. The manager is confident in making day-to-day |                    |

decisions about the care for the young people. She is compassionate and committed and instils these traits into the current staff. The young people and staff speak highly of her characteristics of being fair and conducting an open-door policy.

Unfortunately, the manager will be leaving her post at the end of the year. She has been selected to manage a new home that the organisation is starting early next year. A replacement manager has already been appointed and will take up post prior to the current manager leaving. This overlap will allow a considerable amount of time for a planned handover to occur and ensure consistency in the care for the young people.

The needs of the young people are thoroughly monitored by the manager. She has developed excellent insight into their lives and is able to provide an overall synopsis of their wishes, progress and needs.

There are continuous efforts by the manager to ensure that young people receive good quality of care. Extensive monitoring occurs in the form of the independent visitor's monthly reports and the management's annual reports. Strengths and areas of improvement are identified from this process. The development plan is ambitious and provides forward thinking for the home.

The majority of the staff are suitably qualified with four currently undertaking the course for their level 3 qualification. The new staff have undergone an organised induction process while being mentored by experienced staff members. 'Everyone has been great and made my adjustment easy despite the challenges working with the young people. I feel like I have learned a lot and am confident I can do a good job.' These were the confident words of a staff member working in the home for less than six months.

The staff have high regard for the level of support they receive in relation to their assigned roles. They willingly support each other to establish a strong team around the young people. Records evidence that the training available is extensive and specifically relates to their practice. Regular supervision allows them to have formal discussions with management about the young people, their well-being and practice development. Staff feel valued and are rewarded for their good work; for example, several members of the staff were able to gain promotion.

The statement of purpose is extremely detailed and remains up to date. The document provides a high level of insight into the aims and objectives of the home, all of which are being achieved. The young person's handbook is made available to all young people that are placed in the home, which includes useful information and a few pages to keep their social worker's information and those of family and friends.

Extremely positive and cooperative working relationships have been established with professionals. The staff have evidenced that professionals have praised them for their ability to communicate effectively on behalf of the young people. These

relationships have contributed to timely responses in relation to services and intervention being provided.

All previous requirements made at the last inspection have been met. The requirements and recommendations made at this time do not have an adverse impact on the young people and were positively received by the manager.

## 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 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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