

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	13/12/2016– 14/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC034083
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Caroline Reid
Inspector	Sarah Oldham

Inspection date	13/12/2016 – 14/12/2016
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

SC034083

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Children and young people are supported by an experienced and consistent staff team that places the needs of young people at the forefront of its practice. Consequently, young people feel valued and listened to. They feel that they have made progress and their achievements are recognised and celebrated. They are supported to participate in decisions about their care and staff explain sensitively when it is not always possible for their wishes to be followed.
- Young people report that they feel safe and cared for. They say that staff regularly discuss their safety and well-being with them. Recent reviews of risk assessments has enabled young people to make greater use of independent time spent within the local community in accordance with their age and agreed care plans. This has further contributed to building trusting relationships.
- Education attendance is effectively promoted. One staff member with a background in education support takes the lead, but all staff work consistently to support this, ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to access at least 25 hours education a week, with the use of pupil premium further supporting educational outcomes.
- Achievements are recognised and celebrated. Photographic memories help young people to reflect on the things that they have completed and reflect on how they have progressed. For example, undertaking independence tasks, including meal preparation, using public transport and taking part in activities and holidays.
- Positive behaviour is promoted through consistent plans and discussions with young people. Consequences are discussed with young people. However, records of these are not evaluated clearly to demonstrate their effectiveness and the views of young people are not always recorded.
- Relationships with partner agencies are a strength of the home. This means that young people are protected and their needs are met appropriately. The home provides effective challenge when placement at the home is not in the young person's best interest and provides support to facilitate transition to appropriate services and accommodation.
- The manager undertakes monitoring of the service. However, this has not been as robust in some areas and has already been identified by the management team as an area for ongoing development and improvement. There has been an oversight in ensuring the recently reviewed statement of purpose has been provided to HMCI and some records in relation to consequences and missing from home have not been consistent and evaluative.

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
The registered person must keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it and notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (3)(a)(b))	01/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes the date, time and location of the use of the measure. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(iii))	01/03/2017

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any sanction used to address poor behaviour is restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person must ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority owned home is registered for six children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural and learning difficulties. The statement of purpose details the age range of children and young people from 12 to 17 years of age.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
22/09/2015	Full	Good
12/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/09/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
Young people benefit from living in a home where staff have high aspirations for them. Their needs are supported well and they are nurtured to develop and progress as individuals. They are helped to develop confidence in their abilities and develop emotional resilience. One young person said, 'I have changed so much since I have lived here. Staff have encouraged me to attend education and have confidence in the things I do. I feel safe and happy living here and think it is a great place to live.' The manager undertakes pre-admission impact assessments to support appropriate matching of young people. Staff endeavour to engage all young people to invest in their placement, and, for the majority of young people, this has been successful. However, there has previously been a period of instability in placements, with an increase in young people going missing from home and not engaging with their plans. The staff worked jointly with other professionals, including social workers and police, to review strategies to support and manage this while more appropriate placements were identified for the young people concerned. Although this period presented challenges, requiring the need for additional staffing, this was managed by using staff working for the local authority that were known to the young people. This provided continuity and supported the transition to new placements well, and minimised the negative impact on young people living at the home. Further placements have been robustly planned with all young people stating that they feel happy, safe and positive about the home. Education is promoted and supported well. The home has a designated educational lead who works in partnership with schools and colleges. This enables young people to access the most appropriate educational placement to support attendance and attainment. Staff attend educational meetings and provide support to young people to engage in homework and additional activities to support their learning. Achievements are recognised and celebrated, which young people are very positive about. One social worker commented, 'Education for (name) had previously been very difficult. However, due to the input from the home and the joint working, he now attends school, engages well and has positive aspirations for his future. Staff are working sensitively with him to enable his future transition on to further education to be positive.' Young people's physical and emotional health is supported well. They are registered with community health practitioners and supported to attend their appointments. The home has good links with the looked after children's nurse, who provides information and support in relation to general healthcare support. The	

local authority has appointed six health and well-being practitioners to undertake assessments and provide support of emotional health and well-being of looked after children. A member of this team liaises with the home and visits on a weekly basis to meet with young people to provide specific support and to discuss with staff any additional needs that young people may have. This contributes to the healthcare needs of young people being identified and met holistically.

Young people take part in a range of activities both within the home and in the community. This includes going to the gym, boxing, attending youth centres and theatre groups. Some young people have taken part in a street art project and some have enjoyed a recent summer holiday. This means that young people have the opportunity to meet and form positive relationships with people their own age and develop interests to continue when they move on from the home.

Staff encourage young people to take steps towards independence in accordance with their age and abilities. All young people have their own bedrooms, which they are encouraged and supported to personalise as well as to take care of and keep tidy. They are able to be involved in meal choices, budgeting and shopping as well as preparation of meals. This helps young people to understand the value and costings for daily living and living independently.

Individualised behaviour management plans and strategies help young people to address their behaviours. Reward systems and praise provides positive reinforcement. Some young people who like visual prompts have behaviour charts reflecting their interests and this is commented upon positively by them. One social worker said 'Since living here (name) has really developed as an individual and he receives help and support to manage his behaviour exceptionally well. He has benefited enormously from this placement.

The home is decorated and maintained well, providing young people with a comfortable home. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken and contribute to the young people's safety. However, fire doors are not on magnetic closures but are held open during the day. This has been discussed with the senior management team for review and action.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Children and young people say that staff help them to stay safe and help them develop an awareness that some actions and decisions that they may make, could place them at risk of harm. For example, one young person said, 'Staff have spoken with me about making sure when I go to meet my friends, I keep in touch and return home on time. I didn't always do that and I know they worried about	

me. So now we have agreed to meet up, keep in touch and I return on time.'

Staff work in partnership with other agencies, including police, placing social workers and healthcare professionals to support young people. Where there had been an increase in going missing from care for a small number of young people, multi-agency working and reviewing of the placements enabled strategies to be implemented to minimise risks, while alternative placements were identified that would meet specific needs more appropriately. One social worker said, 'Staff keep me informed of any issues or concerns and make sure I am updated on a regular basis. Staff attend strategy meetings and review risk assessments accordingly. This is one of the best homes I have experienced where the safety and welfare of young people is consistently reviewed and monitored.'

There had been an increase in going missing from home for some young people previously placed. Staff followed agreed procedures and protocols, working in partnership with other agencies to safeguard the individual young people involved. However, despite a range of strategies being implemented, the risks did not significantly decrease. In accordance with agreed discussions and safeguarding concerns, alternative placements were sourced. Staff ensured that the transition to these placements was supported well. Since then, the stability in the young people placed has significantly improved, resulting in a decrease in young people going missing from home. However, records of going missing from home are not consistently robust to demonstrate the procedures followed in all cases.

Young people are supported to manage their behaviours based on open discussion, negotiation and guidance from staff. This enables young people to reflect on their behaviours and to begin to make informed decisions and understand potential consequences of their behaviour. One young person commented, 'I think I have settled down a lot since living here and staff have helped me understand how to look at ways of dealing with things.' Consequences for negative behaviours are recorded. However, there is not consistent, robust evaluation of the impact that consequences are having in supporting young people to change their behaviour. This is an area already being reviewed by the management team. Physical intervention is rarely used. As such, when it is, recording is not specific in relation to where the intervention took place. For example, a record states that it took place within the home but not specifically whereabouts. This does not provide clarity when records are reviewed.

Staff undertake safeguarding and child protection training. This is kept updated to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain current. The staff work in partnership with other safeguarding agencies and comments made about joint working reflect the positive interface between the home and these agencies.

Recruitment and selection procedures are robust to provide suitable safeguarding measures for young people to be protected from people who may pose a risk to them. Since the last inspection, there has been one member of staff recruited

through internal transfer.

Young people understand bullying is not acceptable in any form. This is discussed on an individual basis and within young people's meetings to make sure that they understand the home's stance on anti-bullying. Where there have been issues of concern, young people say that they have felt confident speaking with staff and feel supported. They also discuss the potential for cyber bullying and staff make young people aware of the importance of sharing any concerns with them. There are restrictions on the home's computer to minimise the risk of inappropriate contact being made with the young people. The positive relationships that young people have with the staff support open information sharing, which enables responses to concerns raised to be identified and responded to in a timely manner.

The home is maintained to a good standard, with health and safety checks completed as required. However, door closures are not automatic and due to the size of the building, some fire doors are wedged open during the day to enable staff to supervise the young people. This has been discussed with the fire officer and senior managers are discussing the instalment of magnetic door closures.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager has been in post prior to 2007 when the regulation became the responsibility of Ofsted. She has extensive experience of working within residential childcare settings and holds the necessary qualifications at national vocational level 4 and is currently completing additional relevant management qualifications at level 5. She is supported in her role by two experienced, qualified deputy managers. As a management team, they provide strong and visible leadership. This contributes to the overall open, caring and supportive ethos of the home. Young people are very positive about life at the home. One young person said, 'I like it here. It is the best place I have lived in. The managers are good and they listen to what we have to say. It is better now with some of the other young people having left. They didn't want to be here and tried to make it a difficult place to be, but the managers and staff made sure that everyone was OK and it is really settled now.' The staff feel exceptionally well supported. They feel that the management of the home is inclusive and enables them to contribute to the overall care of the young people. One staff member said, 'We work together to make sure the young people are well cared for and have opportunity like any young person should have, to gain a good education, feel safe and know we want the very best for them.' Another member of staff said, 'We are an established staff team and this provides continuity of support to young people who need stability when they have	

experienced so many changes in other areas of their lives.' A placing social worker said, 'The home is the most welcoming and supportive home I have placed [a] young person in. The staff have high aspirations for the young people and the progress (name) has made has been exceptional. The managers and staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of young people and it is evident the manager promotes this.' Staffing levels at the home are suitable to meet the needs of young people, providing a mix of gender and culture to reflect those of the young people. Regular supervision enables them to reflect and develop their practice. In addition, annual appraisals are undertaken to which the young people contribute their views. Training needs are met with staff accessing in-house and online training. This means their practice is informed by current and relevant information, further contributing to promoting positive outcomes for young people.

The aims and objectives of the home are clearly identified in the statement of purpose. This is kept up to date and provided to interested parties. However, the most recently reviewed copy has not been supplied to HMCI as required by regulations. This does not enable the regulator to have an overview of the current information about the home.

The manager undertakes regular review and monitoring of the service. However, some monitoring has not identified where there has been a shortfall in practice. For example, monitoring of the physical intervention and consequence log. This has been raised with the manager and deputy managers who had identified that this was an area to improve on. The manager demonstrates a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and acknowledges over the summer months that the high level of needs of young people had an impact on some of the overall monitoring. Steps have been taken to address this.

The home's development plan, safe area assessment and individual care plans for young people have been updated and reviewed, with continual monitoring to further improve and develop these documents where there are any changes. Young people's files are maintained to a good order, reflecting the individual history and progress made. They are encouraged to access and contribute to their files, enabling them to have involvement and understanding of their history, progress and planning for their future.

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 looked after children 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 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017