

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	02/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC034851
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered Person	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered Person address	Number One Riverside Rochdale OL16 1XU

Responsible Individual	Jill McGregor
Registered manager	Susan Sloan
Inspector	Louise Redfern

Inspection date	02/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained 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

SC034851

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are supported by a stable and committed staff team, which is motivated and competent and has genuine aspirations for them to achieve their full potential.
- Young people live in a homely and nurturing environment in which staff provide high-quality support, ensuring that specific support agencies are in place to meet their individual needs. Consequently, young people have all made progress from their starting points since living in the home.
- The safety and welfare of young people living at the home is prioritised by the manager and staff team. Staff support young people to make positive choices and reduce their risk-taking behaviour. Consequently, young people recognise the positive impact the home has had on their lives. They say they are safe and well cared for by the staff team.
- The staff team is managed by a dedicated and inspirational leader who is committed to securing continual improvement and providing a high-quality service to all young people who live at the home.
- The staff team members say that they are well supported in their role by the manager, and have regular supervision and team meetings. They participate in regular training. This ensures that they are well equipped to meet the individual needs of the young people placed in the home.
- High-quality relationships are established between parents and professionals, and as a result young people benefit from holistic support.
- Shortfalls raised at this inspection have not had a significant impact on the welfare of the young people. Areas for improvement raised at this inspection include:
 - Improvements to the records of the administration of medication.
 - Ensuring that records of consequences are in line with regulations.
 - The independent visitor comments on the safety and welfare of the young people.
 - Young people being offered the opportunity to speak to an independent person after each episode of missing or absence.
 - Staff appraisals including feedback from professionals and young people.

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 make arrangements for a record to be kept of the administration of medication to each child. (Regulation 23 (c))	31/08/2016
Ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control a record is made as detailed in the regulations. (Regulation 35 (3)(a)(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)(vii))	31/08/2016
The independent person must produce a report about a visit, which sets out, in the independent visitor's opinion, whether children are effectively safeguarded. (Regulation 44 (4)(a))	31/08/2016

Recommendations

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

- When a child returns from being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The appraisal process should take into account the views of other professionals, who have worked with the member of staff, and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement
04/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
17/06/2014	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 caring environment where staff are nurturing and treat them with unconditional positive regard. Staff are not overwhelmed by occasional setbacks when presented with challenging behaviour. The staff team supports and works with the young people to help get them back on track. The home provides a safe, secure and caring environment, and consequently young people enjoy very good relationships with individual staff members. These relationships are built on trust and consistency. Young people say that they value the individual team members because they: 'do loads for me and I can ask X anything.' Given that the relationships are well established, young people say that they feel listened to and confident that staff support them and they feel valued by the individual staff members. Individual staff members speak with pride about the achievements that young people make. The views of young people are central to the home. Their views are constantly sought through young people's meetings, one-to-one sessions and day-to-day conversations. Young people work with key workers to develop their individual plans. This ensures that they feel valued and motivated to work towards their personal goals. Young people have all made progress from their individual starting points. The staff team has worked tirelessly to promote positive educational outcomes. Through consistency, reinforcement of expectation and positive incentives, young people have made good progress, particularly in their attendance. As a result, two young people successfully sat their GCSE examinations, and are currently waiting for their results. One young person commented: 'They just nag me to make sure I am ready for school. I know they do it because they care about me getting to school.' Young people are given every opportunity to thrive educationally and as a result, they have genuine aspirations and goals for their future lives. Young people's health is generally good. They are all registered with healthcare services and attend routine health appointments. However, medication records are not always fully completed, but this has not had a negative impact on the individuals' health. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and to understand the importance of maintaining good health. They are provided with good information and advice about a range of important health matters, such as sexual health, smoking and the consequences of substance misuse. However, some of the young people have continued to engage in activities that might jeopardise their health, despite staff and health professionals' intervention. The	

staff team benefits from regular consultations with a mental health professional. This underpins their knowledge and understanding of the young people's individual emotional needs and helps staff to manage and support young people effectively.

The manager and staff team support each young person to develop independent living skills, and they implement an individual programme for each young person, to prepare them for moving into independent living. They begin to learn a range of practical skills to help them in the future. Young people are given praise and incentives to develop their skills and demonstrate their competence. For example, one young person is now shopping and cooking independently for part of the week. Staff also encourage young people to participate in meaningful activities, both in the home and the community, such as playing for a local football team. As a result, young people have fun, develop confidence and build support networks in the local community in preparation for moving on from the home.

Young people placed at the home are all from the local area, and staff understand and acknowledge the importance of supporting individual relationships that young people have with family members as well as other relationships. Young people are encouraged to maintain these links and networks of support.

Young people and staff work to maintain a homely environment. The building is currently undergoing redecoration, with young people taking an active part in choosing the colours and helping staff to decorate some of the areas of the home. This promotes a sense of ownership and pride in the environment. Young people spoke with pride about the areas of the home they had decorated and started to become involved in. One young person commented: 'I am really enjoying doing the gardening with X. It's just our time doing something together.'

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Young people benefit from being cared for by staff who know them well and understand their individual needs very well. Young people say that they feel safe living in the home, as they have key staff who they feel they can talk to. One young person commented: 'I feel very safe, things have got much better with X being the manager.' Young people are helped, and risk-taking behaviour is reducing, because staff have a good awareness of individual risks. Risk assessments are good. They are clear, detailed and updated regularly. Consequently staff are aware of historical behaviour and potential risks and have clear strategies in place to help reduce	

levels of risk.

Behaviour is effectively managed by a staff team which values the consistency of routines and boundaries. These routines enable young people to adapt and develop their behaviour, which supports improved outcomes. Young people are engaged in regular key work sessions targeting specific areas of difficulties and vulnerability. This has helped young people to reflect upon their behaviour and consider ways of making safer and better choices.

Negative consequences are used on occasions to manage and promote positive behaviour. The manager does review and have oversight of these consequences to ensure appropriateness. Records do record information as required by regulations. Staff are trained in the appropriate use of physical restraint. Incidents of restraint are very rare and are only used as a last resort. The current group of young people have not needed this type of intervention. The dynamics of group living are carefully assessed and monitored by the manager. She effectively plans for new placements to ensure that the admission of new young people does not have a negative impact on the existing group of young people. Young people say that there is no bullying in the home, but are confident staff would act appropriately should any incidents occur. This supports young people feeling safe in the home and promotes their sense of well-being.

There is an effective system in place for responding to allegations and suspicions of harm. Staff fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities, and quality training enables them to respond effectively to child protection concerns. This ensures that young people feel confident in sharing their concerns. Investigations into complaints and serious incidents are handled fairly and are undertaken promptly by the manager. The manager ensures that the relevant partner agencies are informed and appropriate action is taken. One professional commented: 'The staff are quick to report any concerns and do so appropriately.'

There have been a number of missing from home episodes for young people, both previously and for those currently placed at the home. Young people say, and records show, that staff do respond appropriately when they return to the home and try to support the young person to return home as quickly as possible. One young person commented: 'When I was late back the staff were checking I was OK, but I was just late.' However, the manager has not yet ensured that young people are provided with an opportunity to meet with an independent person following any episode of missing or absence from the home. This is a missed opportunity to further support young people, and provide them with the opportunity to share any concerns that they may have with professionals not associated with the home.

Scrutiny of the identities of visitors new to the home is routinely carried out. This ensures that young people are protected within the home.. A range of health and safety checks are routinely carried out to ensure that young people and staff live in

a physically safe environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The home is managed by a manager who, although relatively new to the post, has made substantial progress in making positive changes to the home to improve the quality of care for young people. She secured registration in May 2016 and has a substantial number of years' experience as a manager and of working with vulnerable young people. She is a manager who has a very strong presence in the home and leads by example. Staff and young people have responded positively to her management style. One individual staff member commented: 'Staff morale has improved and I have confidence in her as a manager.' The management and staff team place young people at the centre of the home. They ensure that their individual needs are identified and prioritised, using a well-established key work system to support individual young people. The manager has recently introduced additional joint supervision sessions for key workers assigned to individual young people. These sessions promote effective communication between key workers and aid efficient internal care planning, which means that young people's individual needs are being identified. As a result, the manager is aware of the progress that individual young people are making. The manager has worked tirelessly to provide the staff team with a high level of support. Prior to her taking over the role, the home had a number of different managers in post, which, according to staff, had an impact on staff morale. The stability she has brought to the home has ensured that staff feel well supported and re-energised in their role. They commented that they now receive regular supervisions and team meetings, which provide a forum to share their ideas for improvement and how they can improve outcomes for individual young people. The manager has undertaken appraisals across the staff team. However, this process has not taken into account the views of young people or professionals who work with the staff members. This is a missed opportunity to gather views and improve practice. Staff members benefit from a training programme which supports individual learning and ensures that staff remain equipped with the knowledge to support young people effectively. Since taking over the role, the manager has completed an audit of staff qualifications. This highlighted a shortfall in a small number of staff not being suitability qualified. She has taken action to address this, and consequently all staff are either qualified or working towards qualification. The individual staff members are long-serving staff members who have a significant amount of experience working with the young people currently	

living at the home, so there is no current impact on the quality of care that young people receive.

The home is adequately resourced and delivers the services and support outlined in the statement of purpose, which has been recently reviewed and received by HMCI. The manager ensures that there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet the young people's individual needs. Shortfalls in the rota are covered by the existing staff team and a small number of in-house bank workers to ensure consistency for young people.

External monitoring of the home is well established, and identifies areas for improvement. However the visitor does not comment on their view as to whether young people are being effectively safeguarded. The manager makes good use of internal monitoring and has a development plan in place, which supports her to identify areas of weaknesses and improvements that have been secured across the home.

The manager leads by example in developing professional relationships with supporting agencies. She encourages staff to develop effective working partnerships, and this has resulted in positive joined-up working. For example, one social worker and a member of staff worked together to secure the safe return of one young person to the home after a period of being missing from the home.

All actions from the previous inspection have been addressed by the manager. This shows the commitment and drive the manager has to improve the service and the quality of care provided. Improvements include the implementation of a more child-friendly placement plan which captures young people's views. This supports young people to feel valued and motivated to work towards their personal goals. Risk assessments are now regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Consequently, staff have accurate guidance to support their practice. The manager has worked tirelessly to ensure that young people have improved attendance in their individual educational placements. The manager has ensured that the staff team has a clear understanding of the complaints process, and consequently complaints have been recorded and investigated. The manager has developed questionnaires, which will be used to capture the views of professionals and parents regarding the quality of care in the home, which will be used as a tool by the manager to secure continuous improvement in the home.

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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