

SC034851

Registered provider: Rochdale Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to five young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 2 to 3 October 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people benefit from strong relationships with a stable and consistent staff team. This has helped them to make progress from their previous difficult and often disrupted backgrounds.
- Staff know the young people well and they quickly build relationships and establish trust with them. The staff encourage positive relationships between the young people. This makes the young people feel welcomed and wanted.
- The staff are enthusiastic and ambitious for the young people. The staff believe that they can make positive changes in the young people's lives and assist them to overcome their difficulties.
- The young people's physical health needs are being met. There is good support available to them to identify and address their emotional, social and psychological well-being.
- Young people moving into and out of the home do so in a planned way. They are supported by the staff to make this a positive experience. This is achieved through careful and sensitive planning by the management team and staff.
- Staff identify risks to young people and they carefully consider what action is required to keep young people safe.
- The young people are benefiting from clear and consistent boundaries, daily routines and expectations. Young people's behaviour is improved. Following the last inspection, there are now fewer serious incidents occurring in the home.
- The registered manager is thorough when considering new referrals to the home. She feels supported by senior leaders in the decisions made about the mix of young people who can live together at the home.
- The management team and staff constantly strive to improve practice, through reflective discussions they enable the young people to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- The whole staff team continually monitors and evaluates the young people's progress. The staff team encourages the young people to contribute and involves them in their individual plan of care.
- Realistic development plans are in place to secure the home's improvement. The management team has a good understanding of the home's strengths and areas for improvement.

The children's home's areas for development:

- All young people need to be in full-time education or training, which will benefit them in the future.
- The young people are consulted on a daily basis. However, some records are lacking sufficient evidence to show that their views, wishes and feelings are being responded to appropriately.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Good
24/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
15/07/2015	Full	Requires improvement

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

Recommendations

- Children should be in full-time education whilst they are of compulsory school age, unless their personal education plans contained within the care plan or other plan states otherwise. The home must aim to support full-time attendance unless the child's plans indicate this is not in their best interests. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 28, paragraph 5.14)
- Ensure that children are consulted regularly on their views about the home's care, to inform and support continued improvement in the quality of care provided. Children should be able to see the results of their views being listened to and acted upon. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Following the last inspection, there have been changes to the group dynamics of the young people. This is because some young people have moved on and other young people have come to live in the home. A relaxed, homely atmosphere and welcoming staff help the young people to settle quickly and develop positive relationships. Staff strive to know and understand the young people, making them feel valued and able to form positive attachments. The young people learn to trust the staff, who are consistent and reliable.

The staff team members are consistently encouraging, warm and nurturing in their routine interactions with the young people. An independent reviewing officer commented on the staff's skill and persistence in building positive relationships and supporting young people. She said, 'The staff have been really good at building a relationship with her and supporting her. They worked really hard at engaging her. It has not always been easy but they stuck with it.' This persistence has paid off in that young people who were previously challenging to engage now trust their staff and have started to engage in activities.

During the summer holidays, staff supported the young people to try new experiences, including a trip to the seaside, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Other activities include football, attending a local gym and fishing.

The young people each have an individual residential plan. Young people's key workers work with them to gather their opinions on their placement along with their goals for the future. These plans and discussions help the young people to identify areas in which they require support to aid their progression. The plans are of good quality and clearly

show the young people's contributions.

Young people benefit from regular key-worker sessions to help and support them with any difficulties or issues that they may have. Young people's key workers demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the young people. Key-worker meetings provide a safe forum in which young people's views, wishes and feelings can be explored. However, engagement in meetings, arranged for the young people as a group, at times is poor. It is unclear in the records kept of these meetings how young people's views, wishes and feelings have been responded to by staff. The records of young people's meetings do not demonstrate sufficiently how the young people have influenced or contributed to the running of the home.

The manager and staff understand the importance of education for young people's futures. Some young people have fluctuating engagement with education placements, and can struggle to engage regularly. Other young people are in full-time education and they are doing well. Staff have persevered, and young people have plans for their further education. Staff work closely with multi-agency education partners and local schools to ensure that educational provision best meets young people's individual needs and interests.

Each young person has a detailed health plan. They are supported by the staff to attend preventative health appointments and this ensures that young people's physical health needs are met. Following the last inspection, the medication records have been improved and now show the times when medication has been administered to the young people. Staff have access to, and utilise, external professionals to identify and improve the young people's emotional, social and psychological well-being. This is achieved through the Department for Education's innovative partnership between this local authority and another local authority.

As a result, the young people have access to a named worker who works closely with the staff team in achieving change together in conjunction with the young people. Staff are good at engaging young people so that they are able to talk about their emotions and feelings. These arrangements support the young people in changing their behaviours and outlook on life.

The registered manager and staff understand that transitions into and out of the home can have an impact on the dynamics of the current group. Careful consideration is given by the management team when looking at possible referrals for young people to live at the home. The registered manager has confidence and the backing of senior leaders within the local authority if she believes a new placement of a young person would disrupt the current resident group. Young people who have moved on from the home have done so in a planned way. They continue to be in touch with the staff and visit the home.

The registered manager ensures that the young people are supported to see their family and friends through safe contact arrangements. This means that young people are able to maintain relationships with those who are significant to them.

The home provides young people with a physically safe, appropriately secure, warm, comfortable and homely living environment. The home has now been repaired following some damage caused by previous young people. New carpets have been fitted, walls redecorated and the registered manager has requested external closed-circuit television cameras for the home. This will provide additional security for the home and serve as an effective deterrent for any unwanted visitors to the home.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Prior to their arrival at the home, some of the young people demonstrated significant risk-taking behaviours. Staff are experienced, trained and knowledgeable about helping young people who are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation, substance misuse, self-harm, online safety and criminality. Staff work closely with the young people, provide one-to-one monitoring, undertake quality key-working sessions and bring in specialist support services to educate the young people around social risks. This helps the young people to recognise past unsafe behaviour. As a result, young people gain an understanding of the consequences of their actions and behaviours and make better and safer choices.

The safety and well-being of young people are consistently at the centre of staff practice, irrespective of the challenges that this presents. Staff have a good understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the young people individually and as a group and take appropriate action to address these vulnerabilities. Risks associated with young people are well known and understood by staff.

The young people told the inspector that they feel safe living in the home and that there is no bullying taking place. Following the last inspection, the management team has revised and strengthened individual risk assessments and behaviour management plans. These documents now give the staff clear and detailed guidance, particularly around young people's substance misuse, and strategies for managing these identified risks and behaviours. The staff are now consistent in their approach, and as a result young people's behaviour is improved. Risk-taking behaviour has reduced and there have been no physical restraints.

The registered manager maintains an overview and analysis of individual young people's trends in going missing from the home. This helps the staff to identify and influence young people's patterns of behaviour. There have previously been some high numbers of episodes of going missing, but these are now significantly fewer than they were. Currently, most episodes of going missing are about young people returning home late, rather than staying out overnight. This, plus the increasing tendency for young people to remain in contact when not in the home, means that young people are becoming safer.

The home provides safe indoor and outdoor environments for the young people and regular scheduled health and safety checks are carried out. Fire safety plans are in place, and evacuation drills are practised as required. All visitors to the home are required to show identity and sign in and are advised on arrival of the evacuation procedure and fire

assembly point. Thorough staff recruitment processes are in place. This helps to protect the young people from exposure to unsafe people working in their home. These arrangements ensure that the young people, staff and visitors are safe.

The registered manager notifies professionals, parents and Ofsted about significant events in a timely manner. This makes sure that any action required to keep young people safe is suitable and appropriate. The management team and staff work with the local police to promote the safety of the young people. Staff are experienced and well trained, which enables them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Following the last inspection, there have not been any complaints or allegations made to the children's and young people's services. The staff are trained in how to recognise and respond to allegations and have a good understanding of the home's and local authorities' safeguarding procedures.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home benefits from having a qualified and experienced registered manager who exercises strong and effective leadership over the operation of the home. She is supported by an assistant manager who is equally qualified and experienced. Together and over time, they have brought stability to the home and significantly improved staff morale. The management team is strong and resilient, providing effective leadership. Their support to the staff has been responsive and as a team, reflective to the challenges that the home has faced.

The home has sufficient staff and the whole staff team is qualified and experienced in working with young people. Staffing vacancies are rare and this provides young people with continuity and effective, supportive relationships. Staff themselves told the inspector that they feel very much supported by the management team. They receive regular supervision, annual appraisal, attend productive team meetings and feel that their training benefits them and the young people who they care for.

The registered manager is skilled at using reflection and consultation with staff to influence care practice. For example, in addition to individual staff supervision, she observes key workers and young people as part of a group supervision. The management team arranged a team day away from the home to look at the quality standards and regulations and how the home can improve and develop better practices.

The registered manager does not shy away from considering what went wrong, as well as embracing what worked well. She knows the home's strengths and areas for improvement and these are outlined within the home's development plan. This helps to continuously develop her staff through training and provides the young people with good-quality care practices.

The two requirements in relation to medication and risk assessments and two of the three recommendations in relation to staff appraisal and care planning documentation made at the last inspection have now been met. The recommendation made at the last

inspection in relation to young people's education has been made again at this inspection. This is because some young people have only lived at the home for a short period of time. As a result, it is too early to judge the outcomes for these young people or the progress made by them in full-time education, employment or training.

Staff feel that the home is meeting all of the aims and objectives as set out in its statement of purpose. This document accurately reflects the services that the home aims to deliver along with the details of staff who are to provide the services to the young people.

Effective internal and external quality assurance systems monitor the outcomes of the young people, the progress that they are making, how well they are being safeguarded and any specific areas for additional support. These systems, including the independent person's monthly report, provide constructive challenges to improve the services for the young people. The registered manager is not afraid to challenge other professionals who she feels are not meeting the needs of young people placed in the home.

The management team and staff demonstrate their individual and team capability to work very closely with placing social workers, the local police, multi-agency panels, planning and review teams and senior managers within the local authority. They also maintain good links with youth offending services, schools and parents. Comments from a professional, social worker, youth offending service worker and a parent include:

- 'The work staff do with the young people in this home is commendable. Changes do happen and these positive changes are in the best interest of all the young people.'
- 'The staff keep me regularly updated and, although it has only been a short period, I am confident with what I have seen that the young person is in the best place.'
- 'The staff are excellent and provide very good support, because of this, each time I visit, I can see the positive changes the young person has made.'
- 'I have no concerns about the staff and they treat her very well and as their own daughter. They are doing a great job.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC034851

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, Number One Riverside, Rochdale OL16 1XU

Responsible individual: Jill McGregor

Registered manager: Susan Sloan

Inspector

Mark Kersh: social care inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding 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 1231, 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 <http://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 <http://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: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2017