

SC034851

Registered provider: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority-run children's home that provides care and accommodation for up to five children and young people.

Children and young people placed at the home will present with varying degrees of difficulties. They may be traumatised, been subjected to abuse, or misunderstood. The home provides a stable and caring environment to develop the children and young people's potential.

A registered manager has been in place since May 2016. She has the relevant experience and qualifications for her post.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 September 2018

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: 2 October 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
02/10/2017	Full	Good
14/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Good
24/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet 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 must comply within the given timescale.

Requirement	Due date
25: Fire precautions Ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that persons working at the home and, so far as reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire. (Regulation 25(1)(d))	04/10/2018

Recommendations

- Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, and paragraph 4.23)

In particular, ensuring that the balance of non-prescribed medication is correct and recorded.
- As part of reviewing and revising where appropriate the Statement of Purpose (regulation 16(3)(a)), the registered person should review and update the children's guide as necessary, and make sure children are given an explanation of any changes. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 24, and paragraph 4.23)
- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Children and their parents should be supported to understand the nature of records kept by the home and how to access them. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep and encourage children to keep appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, and paragraph 14.5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people are settled living in the home and they are making good progress as the reduction in behavioural incidents has reduced. The staff successfully deliver individualised care in a nurturing and supportive environment.

Children and young people benefit from warm and supportive relationships with the staff and with each other. The staff are resilient, patient, caring and sensitive to the children and young people's needs. This helps the children and young people to strengthen relationships from the time that they came to live in the home.

The children and young people's physical health needs are met through appointments attended at the local health centre. Medication is stored securely and audited weekly for accountability. However, during the inspection the medication stored did not balance with the records kept in the home. This was corrected during the inspection. Because of this, a recommendation is made. Additional safeguards are needed to ensure that staff accurately record each time when medication is administered to the children and young people.

Most young people are improving their emotional and social well-being. They are generally happy and more confident. An independent reviewing officer told the inspector that plans are now in place and funding has finally been agreed to provide therapy to a young person. Because of this, the necessary professional interventions to support the young person have been delayed.

Some children and young people have a history of poor school attendance. Therefore, some have found it difficult to engage in education. The staff have worked hard with the children and young people and teachers. Staff understand and overcome the individual barriers affecting the children and young people's attendance at school. For one young person, this has enabled him to complete his exams. Education provision is in place for all children and young people to start the September 2018 term.

The management team identifies the children and young people's needs prior to their admission to the home. Children and young people can visit the home before moving in, or staff visit them. All the admissions into the home, and most of the transitions from the home, are planned. This approach helps the children and young people to feel welcomed and helps staff to prepare for their arrival or departure.

Children and young people are involved in planning their care and take part in their review meetings. They express their views and opinions through regular themed meetings with the staff. The staff are skilled in negotiating and agreeing solutions to issues that the children and young people may have. The children and young people told the inspector that they feel that the staff listened to them. They know how to complain and appreciate being consulted and they feel included in decision-making.

There is a strong emphasis on developing life skills and experiences. The staff support the children and young people to have outside interests and to try new activities. Children and young people are prepared for independence through personalised

programmes that are provided by their key workers. Some young people who have moved on into adulthood remain in touch with the staff in the home.

Contact arrangements for the children and young people are supported by the staff. This ensures that contact helps the children and young people to maintain relationships with those people who are important to them.

The children and young people, the staff and the management team have worked hard to improve the appearance of the home. The home now provides a homely and well-decorated appearance. Any damage is quickly repaired. The children and young people are involved in choosing colours and furnishings for the home and for their bedrooms.

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

The staff are experienced and trained and they demonstrate a good understanding of effective safeguarding practice. The children and young people in the home are kept safe. The staff understand risks, assess them well and they put appropriate boundaries and expectations in place. These include agreed incentives and the children and young people understand these.

Children and young people have individualised risk management plans that are developed and reviewed with advice from other professionals. This ensures that staff understand the risks that the children and young people may place themselves in. The risk management plans also help the staff to plan interventions to help reduce the children and young people's risks.

The staff have a thorough understanding of the individual missing from home care plans. Their response to any child or young person missing from the home is quick. They follow and do their best to engage with the child or young person. When this does not work, they text and call to ensure that the child or young person is safe. These individualised strategies are having a positive impact with the children and young people who now keep in touch with the staff. Because of this, the children and young people are missing for shorter periods of time and less frequently.

An independent person from a charitable organisation visits the home weekly and provides drop-in sessions for the children and young people. This provides opportunities for additional support while, at the same time, covers any return home interviews when children and young people have been missing from the home. The children and young people regularly engage in these sessions.

The management team and staff regard physical intervention as a last resort. As a result, there has been only one intervention since the last inspection. This was appropriate under the circumstances and was managed safely to guide a child away and calm them down from an aggressive situation.

Bullying is not an issue in the home and the children and young people are not subjected to child sexual exploitation. Clear agreements are in place around social media sites and mobile phone usage. This protects the children and young people and provides them with information about how to recognise and report grooming, radicalisation and extremism.

The registered manager has systems in place for checking the health and safety and fire precautions of the children and young people, and staff and visitors. She delegates the application of these arrangements to staff and oversees their implementation.

However, although a weekly fire test is carried out and recorded, the records did not show that a new child accommodated in the home had received these instructions. Also, the records showed that the last night-time fire evacuation test took place in 2016. Because of this, a requirement is made. This is to ensure that the children and young people are aware of the procedure to be followed in the case of a fire and how to safely evacuate the home, including night-time evacuations.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is a qualified social worker with considerable experience in working with children and young people. She is experienced, skilled and capable. She gives the needs of the children and young people the highest priority and is ambitious for them all. She has a strong, competent team of experienced and qualified staff and is well supported by her qualified and experienced assistant manager.

Staffing vacancies are rare in this home. Currently, one part-time post is vacant. This vacancy does not impact on the care provided to the children and young people. The current staff are covering the shortfall in hours for this post. New staff are carefully recruited to ensure that they are suitable people to be working with the children and young people. Thorough checks are undertaken, and new staff are not able to start working at the home until all the checks are received and have been verified.

The management team and staff receive regular supervisions and annual appraisals. This provides opportunities to reflect on the work they do with the children and young people and for them to identify any training needs. The staff told the inspector that they feel valued by the home's management team and are supportive of one another.

The home is operating in line with the statement of purpose. However, this document needs revising to reflect the change in staffing. Children and young people receive a handbook and children's guide. During the inspection, this information was only available on the computer and could not be printed off. Because of this, a recommendation is made. This is to ensure that information about the home is accurate and that a hard copy for information is available about the home for the children and young people.

Monthly monitoring visits by an independent visitor are undertaken. The visitor supplies reports of their monitoring visits as required, which are in turn sent to Ofsted in line with regulation. The registered manager has monitoring systems in place which contribute to her quality of care report. The manager has acted to address the two recommendations from the last inspection.

The children and young people's case files and placement plans contain the relevant information in line with regulation. The children and young people have an individual memory journey book, although these are in the early stages of production. As a result, the staff are not capturing the good work that they complete with the children and young people.

Because of this, a recommendation is made. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child or young person to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. Staff should keep, and encourage children to keep, appropriate memorabilia of the time spent living at the home and help them record significant life events.

The management team understands the home's strengths and areas that need to be improved. The registered manager and staff have maintained good communication with other agencies. This includes the healthy young minds service and the youth offending team and the police. This helps to ensure that there is a joined-up response to support the children and young people's needs.

The registered manager is matching the young people who live at the home effectively. Children and young people admitted to the home do so in a planned way. She has refused referrals for children and young people where she has considered possible conflicts with the existing group of children and young people. The registered manager is confident that her decisions about placements are supported by senior leaders in the authority.

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: Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale OL16 1XU

Responsible individual: Jill McGregor

Registered manager: Susan Sloan

Inspector

Mark Kersh, social care inspector

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