

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC034922
Inspector	Jacqueline Malcolm
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council PO Box 39 ROCHDALE Lancashire OL16 1LQ
Responsible individual	Paul Marshall
Registered manager	Shane Michael Heywood
Date of last inspection	12/02/2014

Inspection date	25/07/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	outstanding
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people live in a good nurturing home. They enjoy an excellent quality of care which is supported by comprehensive and thorough personalised care plans. This improves young people's outcomes over time in all aspects of their lives. Staff practices ensure that young people's safety and welfare is actively promoted and young people say they feel safe. Young people's behaviour is well managed. Their strong relationships with staff help young people to self-regulate their behaviours and minimise their involvement in conflict situations. Young people influence the running of the home and feel listened to. An excellent strength of the home is the well-formed and established relationships with parents and professionals. This ensures stability, consistency and a strong team around the child.

All young people have an educational placement and all have thrived from their starting point, which improves their future prospects. Young people's health needs are well identified and met. They have good access to health professionals and are regularly advised and supported on risky behaviours that may impact on their health, such as smoking.

The home is efficiently and effectively managed by a Registered Manager who is committed to raising standards and improving young people's outcomes. A strong, well-retained and experienced staff team care for young people with competence

and skill. Staff show genuine affection for the young people and continue to act as good parents to them. Professionals say, 'the staff are passionate about their job and care about the children. They try hard to understand the child's presentation'. A parent said, 'I really can't think of any way it could be better. It's very well run and a happy friendly environment'.

As a result of this inspection one requirement and several recommendations have been raised to help the home to improve outcomes and bear no detriment to young people's safety and welfare. These relate to the home sending the home's revised Statement of Purpose to HMCI, Ofsted, obtaining pathways plans for eligible young people, reviewing the home's development plan, evidencing that the manager has regular supervision and to ensure that complaint records confirm that young people are satisfied with how issues raised by them have been addressed.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The children's home is run by a local authority. It is registered to accommodate up to four young people of either gender who have experienced behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2014	Interim	good progress
09/10/2013	Full	good
25/03/2013	Interim	good progress
09/11/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
4 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall provide a copy of the reviewed Statement of Purpose to Ofsted. (Regulation 4 (2))	01/09/2014

Recommendations

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

- ensure that all children communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support. In relation to confirming that young people who complain are satisfied

with how their complaints have been dealt with (NMS 1.3)

- contribute to the development of each child's care plan, including the pathway plan for "eligible" care leavers and work collaboratively with the young person's social worker or personal advisor in implementing the plan(NMS 12.2)
- review and implement the homes development plan (NMS 15.2)
- ensure the written record kept detailing the time and date and length of each supervision held for each member of staff, includes the registered person. (NMS 19.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young People make good progress and have good outcomes in all aspects of their lives. They are happy with life at the home and state that they can discuss worries or concerns with staff. A social worker commented that 'since moving into the home, the young person has made very good progress and is really settled'. Young people develop a positive self-view as a result of the support they receive. Whilst living in the home young people have developed a sound ability to forge and sustain positive attachments, resulting in increased self-esteem, confidence and emotional resilience.

As a result of living in the home young people's relationships with their families and significant others has immensely improved. One parent commented that family dynamics are much better, thus enabling their relationships to repair and flourish. Contact with family and significant people is a positive and enjoyable experience for young people. They have a strong sense of identity, which is reinforced by the promotion of contact.

Young people are active participants within the home and the community and take opportunities to develop their individual interests and hobbies. They are confident, self-assured and sociable young people who have lots of friends within the community.

Young people know how to access a range of health services. This ensures their holistic needs are identified and well met. Young people who smoke are well informed about the dangers of smoking and the associated health risks. However, they refuse to listen to the good advice and support to cease smoking, which may impact negatively on their health outcomes.

Educational outcomes for young people are good taking into account their progress from the start of their placement. Young people are supported to attend education and their attendance has improved. Young people attend parent's evenings with staff and their families. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated which helps young people to develop their confidence. The likelihood of young people having better educational outcomes, leading to greater prospects as adults has improved since living in the home.

Pathway plans are not on file, however this has not impacted young people as planning is underway. Young people have good independence skills they are learning how to budget, cook, prepare meals and travel independently. Young people are developing an ability to care for themselves on a practical and emotional level. This enhances their survival skills when they move on towards independent lives.

Quality of care

outstanding

The ethos of the home is one of mutual respect, support, care and commitment. Young people benefit from a range of excellent support provided to them by an experienced, knowledgeable and consistent staff team. The strong relationships between young people and staff are evident and demonstrate the high aspirations and a genuine drive that staff adopt to help young people achieve. This has been confirmed by professional stakeholders who say, 'I think that the home provides a consistent and caring approach and there are excellent relationships between staff and young people and also between the young people within the home' and 'staff at Furness Road have a tendency to go more than the extra mile'.

Young people live in a caring and nurturing environment. Their strong, encouraging and supportive relationships with staff help them to effectively meet young people's needs. One parent commented that 'staff are welcoming, approachable, supportive and friendly. My child's needs have been met and cared for'. Young people know how to complain. Issues raised by them have been thoroughly addressed with strong oversight from the independent reviewing officer and senior management. This shows that concerns raised by young people are taken seriously. Young people have regular key worker sessions and confirm that staff are supportive and help them with aspects of their lives. Generally young people get on with each other. This leads to a more harmonious home environment which young people feel safe and at ease. There have been occasions whereby group dynamics have been challenged following incidents. Nevertheless, staff are quick to respond and do so in a timely manner in order to resolve the situation for the young people involved.

Staff have considerable skills in managing behaviour and embrace opportunities to help young people to reflect. Positive behaviour is encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded. Comprehensive and thorough placement plans and risk assessments are in place; these are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure they remain current. The combination of thorough care planning, risk assessments and behaviour management strategies has resulted in a marked reduction in risk taking behaviours. This further promotes young people's safety and wellbeing.

Young people influence the running of the home. They are able to express their opinions in a variety of ways, such as regular key worker sessions, suggestions box and monthly young people's meetings. Using a variety of methods to gain young people's views has undoubtedly resulted in group of young people who feel valued, respected and listened to.

Staff are consistent in supporting young people's educational achievement and attendance. Staff have also developed excellent working relationships with parents and ensure they are kept well informed. This has been confirmed by a parent who stated 'the staff keep me well informed, they also phone me to update me on positives as well'. A further comment was made to acknowledge that staff have worked hard to support their child and 'staff have been a massive support to myself

during difficult times with my child’.

Staff encourage and promote meaningful activities for young people. Young people are able to take part in a range of activities including, rugby, football, cinema and playing golf. This promotes a strong sense of achievement and enjoyment in young people's lives.

The home is well decorated, pleasantly furnished and homely. It is conveniently located and close to community facilities. The atmosphere is welcoming and friendly and young people benefit from a warm, comfortable home to live in.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Young people's safety and welfare is promoted at this home and young people confirm they feel safe. Staff safeguarding training provides them with a coherent understanding of safeguarding policies and related procedures. Staff are also alerted to recognise and act on any signs and symptoms of harm, including abuse, child sexual exploitation and bullying. A professional commented that the staff team have 'a really good understanding of safeguarding and risk management'. Young people benefit immensely from staff who understand their vulnerabilities and regularly talk to them about keeping safe at all times. A member of staff said, 'I feel we have the mechanisms in place to deal with safeguarding young people'. These measures ensure that young people are safe.

Risk taking behaviours, including missing from care incidents have reduced. This minimises the known risks associated with anti-social behaviours which has led to fewer police interventions. In the event that young people go missing from care, staff take proactive measures, such as contacting young people's mobile phones and going out looking for them. A professional stakeholder said, 'the children on the whole are there for a reason – that their lives have been affected; it would be unrealistic to say they don't go missing but if they do it is dealt with effectively by staff'.

Young people are regularly encouraged by staff to discuss their views about living together and discuss any matters that may negatively impact on the group dynamics. This helps staff address any emerging conflicts and promotes mutual respect. Young people understand that bullying behaviour is unacceptable. They have access to a range of support systems, such as children's rights and staff interventions. A recent incident was effectively managed within the multi-disciplinary safeguarding arena with parental involvement. This level of intervention and accountability keeps young people safe and helps them to live in an environment that is free from the risk of fear and intimidation.

Young people are encouraged to self-regulate their emotions through reflection and discussions with staff. As a result, young people are more able to take responsibility

and understand the impact of negative behaviours can have upon themselves and others. Sanctions imposed help young people to learn that socially acceptable behaviours can improve their future prospects. No young people have been restrained at this home for a long time. This is due to the highly effective de-escalation techniques used by staff that help young people to modify their behaviours. A young person said, 'I have never been restrained whilst at the home, the staff use de-escalating skills/methods to avoid restraint'.

No new staff have been employed at the home since the last inspection. However, the recruitment systems in place ensure that staff are carefully selected and vetted before they are allowed to care for young people.

Appropriate checks of visitors and the monitoring of them minimises young people's access to unsuitable people.

Young people's health and safety is protected in a physically safe and secure environment. Regular examination of fire prevention equipment through fire tests and drills ensure that young people know how to quickly evacuate the premises on the sound of the fire alarm. Gas and electrical appliances are regularly checked to ensure their continued safety. These robust arrangements keep young people, staff and visitors safe.

Leadership and management

good

A qualified and experienced Registered Manager has been registered with Ofsted since 2011. They drive strong leadership and motivate the staff team. A professional stakeholder said, 'the manager at this home provides very thoughtful care, which positively influences the rest of the staff team'. Staff are empowered to freely share their ideas so that they can implement service improvements. The manager is ably deputised by a qualified and experienced assistant manager who ensures the smooth running of the home in their absence. Staff have confidence in the homes management and feel that their working relationships help them to improve young people's outcomes. Staff say, 'the commitment of the management and staff team to improve our services to young people is a continual process. Everyone wants to improve the outcomes for young people in our care' and 'all staff within the home strive to make improvements to all young people placed here'. This open and continually evolving child-centred approach underpins young people's good outcomes and excellent quality of care.

Young people are cared for by a very stable experienced staff team. They have the competence and resilience to consistently and effectively meet young people's diverse needs and demands. Good staff support enables them to carry out their roles with skill and confidence. For example, staff receive regular supervision and a record is maintained detailing the arrangements. However, records have not been updated following the registered managers supervision. Although there is no negative impact on young people's welfare, this makes the frequency of the support provided to the

manager less transparent. Daily handovers and team meetings keep staff well informed about the young people's progress and involved in the developments in the home. A member of staff said, 'We as a staff team have team meetings where we discuss how we can improve the service and try and think out of the box to bring new ideas to the home and it would engage and inspire the children to achieve better outcomes for themselves'. Most staff feel that their on-going professional development and training needs are identified and met and supervision enables them to reflect on their practice. These support mechanisms contribute to making everyone accountable and involved in the delivery of services to young people.

Care practices are monitored and scrutinised by the manager and independent external visitor. Respectively, they are effective in highlighting the positives and areas of concern, such as the bullying incident. These have been addressed. Consultation with young people, parents and relatives, staff and social workers during this process helps to gain an overall view of the quality of care.

The homes Statement of Purpose describes the homes functions and how it intends to care for young people under the new regulations. However, it has not been received by Ofsted to inform the regulator about the services young people can expect to receive.

Young people's records are safely secured, up to date and provide a clear audit trail of events. This ensures that young people have a legible account of their progress. Good practice recommendations made at the previous inspection relating to shortfalls in records have been addressed. This shows that the home has capacity to improve.

The manager has addressed a neighbourhood concern with no further issues and community relationships remain good. Complaints made by young people are handled sensitively. However, young people's comments confirming their satisfaction with how their complaints have been dealt with are not confirmed in writing. This does not provide a clear audit in the event of a future challenge. The homes strengths and weakness are known by the manager, but the development plan has not been reviewed. This does not provide the manager with a clear focus on the homes future priorities.

Professionals speak very positively about the home and say that staff communicate well with them. A stakeholder said, 'the staff work really well with me to keep me up to date on events. Their recording of events is very good and the child speaks highly about the staff'.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.