

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC035220
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Joan Inns
Inspector	Debbie White

Inspection date	28/03/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection This home was judged outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness. The children continue to make excellent progress as a direct result of living at this children's home. The staff provide high-quality care and support, and they are fully committed to ensuring that the children have outstanding outcomes. Relationships are very caring and nurturing, which help the children to rebuild their trust in the adults around them. For children who have experienced significant childhood trauma, loss and separation, learning how to gain trusting attachments is a vital part of them moving forward into a permanent, 'forever family'. The children are very happy in their home. This is demonstrated by their behaviours and their testimony. There are lots of smiling faces and laughter when the children are in the house, and they are visibly relaxed and content. On their return from school, the children ran into the home full of excitement, eager to tell the staff about their day. They all wanted cuddles from the staff, who warmly greeted the children. A member of staff said: 'You will hear them arrive when they come home from school, they are always full of energy.' A child said: 'It is great here, and I love the staff.' The children are fit and healthy and they live a very healthy lifestyle. They all like to take part in outdoor activities, including sports. All the children are keen swimmers, and they enjoy riding their bicycles and playing football. A child who was previously afraid of water has learned to swim since he moved into the home. This is a great achievement for him, and has significantly boosted his confidence. All the children's health needs are met. They have access to all primary health services and healthcare specialists. This ensures that they thrive and meet their developmental milestones. A member of staff said: 'When we first took [name] to the swimming baths, he wouldn't go near the water, and now we can't get him out. He loves it.' A child said: 'We do everything, and go on trips and walks, and I am good at football.' Dedicated staff use a research-based therapeutic model of care to support the children. This model is particularly effective when working with younger children	

who have had multiple placements. This way of working has unreservedly enabled a number of children to bond with new foster carers and they are now living with their new families in a permanent, stable foster home. The outcomes for these children are exceptional. The staff are actively supported by the local authority therapy team, which comprises a psychologist, therapeutic social workers and qualified mental health workers. This level of expertise, along with consistent multi-agency working, surrounds the children with a wealth of experienced professionals and a highly trained staff team, which significantly increases their likelihood of having a bright, happy, meaningful future.

A member of staff said: 'We keep in regular contact with [name of the psychologist] and the therapy team who advise and support us. The social workers visit often, and we have regular care team meetings. We have daily reflection about the children, and how their days have been, and we work well as a team. Consistency is crucial for our children.'

The children are safe and the staff are aware of each child's potential risk factors. Risks are managed effectively and appropriately, taking into account the children's ages and their understanding. The children are supported to take part in everyday childhood activities, as part of their development and learning, such as climbing trees, riding their bicycles and playing on the trampoline. This proportionate approach helps the children to learn how to think about their activities and how to consider their options to prevent any accidents or injuries.

Behaviour is managed positively and effectively. The staff talk to the children to help them understand that their behaviours are not their fault, which helps to reduce the children's distress and feelings of shame. Restraints are very rarely used, and are only considered as a last resort. The children are carefully and fully de-briefed after a restraint has occurred, which maintains their positive relationships with the staff.

The children have individual behaviour management plans that are, in the main, very thorough and robust. However, there has been an oversight in one of the children's plans, when a recent new behaviour has emerged that has not been included in the child's behaviour management plan, or their risk assessment. There is no immediate risk to the child; however, should the behaviour reoccur, failure to keep important records updated could potentially affect the children's welfare.

Leadership and management outcomes are superb. The registered manager leads a highly effective team that consistently delivers innovative care and support to the children. The staff feel valued and supported and they are unquestionably committed to their work and the children. The registered manager is experienced in her area of practice, and she ensures that she continually updates her knowledge and her level of expertise.

A staff member said: 'We are kept busy and every day is a challenge but in a good way. We all pull together, and [name of manager] helps us cover the shifts, which the children love. All in all, things are good, we are all happy and the children are

doing really well, which is the main thing.'

Partnership working with professionals and foster carers involved with the children is an evident strength. This way of working enhances all aspects of the children's lives and significantly improves their outcomes. The registered manager is also very supportive of her peers and colleagues. She has linked with a number of other children's homes to offer the registered managers and staff support, guidance and advice.

Following a meeting with the registered manager, a manager from a different home contacted Ofsted to say how helpful the registered manager had been and how much she had learned from her visit.

Monitoring is robust and drives improvement and development. The independent visitor's reports are thorough and they are highly complementary about the home, the staff, and the outcomes for the children.

The internal monitoring systems are also robust, and show that the registered manager has a very good oversight of the home, how the staff work, and the progress of the young people. This provides the children with a safe, stable home.

There is one recommendation arising from this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This children's home offers care and accommodation for up to three children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It is operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/12/2016	Full	Outstanding
15/12/2015	Full	Outstanding
04/08/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 that 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 focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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