

SC035339

Registered provider: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The local authority owns the children's home. It provides care and accommodation for up to seven young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 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: 20 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Managers and staff provide positive and nurturing support to young people with highly complex emotional and behavioural needs.

- Young people said that the staff listen to them and consider their views about their daily care needs.
- Staff work well with a range of agencies to support the welfare and safety of young people who engage in risk-taking behaviours which place them at risk of harm.
- Staff support young people to maintain contact with family and friends, as agreed with the placing authority.
- Staff work hard to improve the overall experiences of young people living in the home. As a result, most are making progress in areas of their lives, including attending further education and gaining employment. When young people demonstrate limited engagement in their placement, staff work hard to gain young people's trust and build positive relationships.
- Young people have regular opportunities to engage on an individual basis or as a group to provide their views and ideas about the home.
- Professionals and parents were very complimentary about the standard and quality of care provided to all young people.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staffing levels within the home require regular review to ensure that there are sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual needs of each young person.
- Authorisation for the independent visitor to access young people's records is required. This will enable an independent oversight of young people's records to make sure that they are reflective of the care and support provided.
- Ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/03/2017	Interim	Improved effectiveness
13/12/2016	Full	Good
16/03/2016	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
10/11/2015	Full	Outstanding

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) 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(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
13: The leadership and management standard The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that the home has sufficient staff to provide care for each child. (Regulation 13(1) and (2)(d))	30/11/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that records of restraint enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly when any issues or trends of concern emerge. This particularly relates to ensuring that restraint records meet the requirements of Regulation 35. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59)
- For most looked-after children, many of these planning duties fall to the placing authority. The registered person should ensure that they and their staff engage proactively with the placing authority to contribute fully to the relevant plans for the child's care on a regular basis. Homes should consider during this engagement, seeking appropriate permission for the person conducting independent visits to access the relevant parts of the child's records, as agreed with the child. (Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 56, paragraph 11.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

At the last inspection, there had been changes within the staff team, including the promotion of the deputy manager to the role of manager. Since that time, the new staff team members have worked consistently together to provide a good level of care for the young people living at the home. New members of staff appointed have fully integrated into the team. Young people told the inspector that they have good relationships with all the staff. One young person said, 'Staff here are fantastic. They show they care and take an interest in all the things I do.'

Although young people did not respond to the questionnaires sent by Ofsted, the manager and staff ensure that they are regularly consulted and involved in their care. The young people who spoke with the inspector during the inspection confirmed this. One young person said, 'I am always asked about what I want to be involved in within the home. We have regular meetings, although some of us choose not to attend these all the time. We can speak with any of the staff or the manager and I feel they listen to what we have to say.' Throughout the inspection, young people positively engaged with the staff and each other. They discussed what they had been doing throughout their day and their plans for the evening. Professionals commented positively about the home and the positive impact that the care provided has for young people. They confirmed that, in the majority of cases, young people's behaviour and overall outcomes had improved from their initial placement at the home.

The manager and staff support young people to move from the home in a planned way. Two young people have successfully moved into a semi-independent placement and another young person is preparing to return to live with their family. These are positive outcomes for the young people. The manager and staff have recently developed a semi-independence booklet for young people to complete and retain when they move on. This will help them to reflect on the life skills they have learned. One young person said, 'I hope to get my own flat when I leave here. I know how to cook and clean but the staff know I am worried about paying bills and finances. They are helping me to understand about setting up payments and how to manage money so when I do move, I will know what to do.'

Staff members encourage and support young people to access appropriate educational resources. This includes school, college and apprenticeships. This means that the vast majority of young people have appropriate placements to gain experience and skills to contribute to their future. However, a recent decision about a young person's educational placement was not made in consultation with the manager, staff or social worker. This has had a negative impact for the young person and has resulted in their education placement ending. The manager has raised concerns with senior managers within the local authority about the lack of involvement they had in the decision-making process. While alternative arrangements are being resourced, staff members are supporting the young person to access online educational resources.

Individual healthcare plans are in place. Staff support young people to attend healthcare appointments. Where additional healthcare resources are required, for example assistance with smoking or substance misuse, young people are encouraged to access these resources. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the impact and effect of substance misuse. As a result, young people at the home who have a history of substance misuse have significantly reduced their use of illegal substances. This has improved their overall health. Staff members continue to remain vigilant to the signs of any substance misuse and instigate risk management strategies and individual key-work sessions to support young people.

Young people receive daily support to maintain contact with people who are important to them. Contact plans are included in the young person's care plan. A strength of the home is how staff work in partnership with parents and carers, offering additional support to them if they need help with contact. This ensures that contact remains a positive experience for young people and family members.

The home is maintained to a good standard, with young people consulted about the decor and furnishings in their individual bedrooms and the communal living areas. Young people confirmed that they are happy with how they have personalised their bedrooms. Refurbishment of the bathrooms has been agreed and this is due to commence in the near future. The home has ample space for young people to relax and spend time together. Staff and young people take pride in their home and this is evident in the accommodation provided.

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

Young people say that they feel safe at the home. Staff members demonstrate a good understanding of young people's needs, behaviours and vulnerabilities. Risk assessments are individualised and reflect the diverse personalities of young people. The staff are clear about the young people's level of risk and vulnerabilities and can verbalise the actions that they take in supporting young people during these times.

Some young people continue to engage in risk-taking behaviours, including missing from home episodes. Staff work in partnership with other agencies to help reduce the missing episodes. Overall, there is evidence that the strategies and support implemented are having a positive impact on young people. Although episodes of missing remain high, they are decreasing for most young people. In addition, staff have individual sessions with young people to help them understand the risks associated with them leaving the home and not informing staff of their whereabouts. As a result, most young people are keeping in touch with the staff and informing them of their whereabouts. This has enabled staff to provide additional support to encourage young people's safe return to the home.

When there are increased risks associated with young people missing from home, the manager has been proactive in raising this with the local authority senior managers. Regular strategy meetings have identified whether a more appropriate placement is required. For one young person, this is being pursued as a matter of urgency.

Staff members work cohesively together to manage challenging behaviour. Additional support from children and adolescent mental health services to understand and address some behaviours displayed by young people has been resourced and implemented. However, the placing authority has identified the need for a specialist placement for one young person and are currently actively searching for this. In the meantime, the manager is not admitting any young people to the home until this resource has been found. This is to minimise the impact of further disruption on the young people currently living at the home.

Staff work with young people to manage behaviours in an effective way. Restorative approaches to behaviour management help young people to understand the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others. During the times when young people become distressed and exhibit behaviour that places them and others at risk, staff are skilled and trained in using physical intervention, although this is kept to a minimum and is very much a last resort. The manager maintains an oversight of most of these records. However, the manager had not signed two restraint records. To date this has not had a detrimental impact on the safety of young people. The manager took immediate action to rectify this and was able to show that she had reviewed the incident reports relevant to these restraints.

During the inspection, young people told the inspector that they felt safe and that the staff had really helped them to understand the importance of staying safe. One young person said, 'I feel a lot better about myself and can see how some of the things I did could have been dangerous. I think the staff here have helped me have a better understanding and I know what I want in my future and staff are helping me with this.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager registered with Ofsted on 8 March 2017. She had previously worked in the home for five years as the deputy manager. She has a background of working with children and young people, both within residential care and in the fostering services. A deputy manager supports her in her role. They, along with the staff team, have high aspirations for the young people. They endeavour to make the home feel homely and support young people to access education, apprenticeships and work opportunities. One staff member said, 'Despite the number of challenges, as a staff team we want young people to know we care about them and want them to achieve and make progress. The emphasis is on making this feel a safe, welcoming and supportive home for young people to live.' One young person said, 'It's a good home. Staff don't give up on us and even when we are experiencing lots of difficulties, they try to help to make sure we are safe and they tell us how important we are.' Another young person said, 'I'm glad to be back here.'

Before young people move into the home, the manager completes individual impact assessments. Due to the increased needs of some young people, the home is not accepting any further admissions until alternative accommodation, which is more appropriate, is located. The local authority is in agreement with the plan, as well as

plans for additional staffing. Although the manager reviews the staffing levels to ensure that young people are safeguarded, this process is not consistent. For example, additional staffing had been put in place to support one young person in crisis. When this was no longer required, this was reduced. However, a recent increase in the young people's behaviours had identified the need for a further review of staffing. However, this had not been implemented at the time of the inspection.

The staff team accesses a range of training to enable it to have the knowledge and skills to meet the young people's needs. When staff members do not hold the level 3 qualification, they are enrolled on this after their probation period. Staff receive regular supervision, which enables them to reflect on their practice. As part of supervision, training and development is discussed. This ensures that any gaps in training or further development opportunities are accessed. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of specific issues for the current young people living at the home, in particular child sexual exploitation, safeguarding and missing from care. The training they have undertaken further underpins their practice.

The manager has reviewed the home's development plan and has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further improvement. Risk assessments include information about fire doors. Fire door activation points are checked regularly and the fire officer has visited the home to confirm that these are in working order. Further improvement work to the home has been agreed, including the refurbishment of bathrooms. The home continues to be maintained to a good standard, with young people contributing their ideas to the decor and furnishing of the home.

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: SC035339

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Registered provider address: Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council Civic Centre
West Street Oldham OL1 1UT

Responsible individual: Jill Beaumont

Registered manager: Dianne Chesters

Inspector

Sarah Oldham, 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