

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	17/03/2017
Unique reference number	SC035380
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Registered person address	6 Alma Street, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS18 2AP
Responsible individual	Rhona Bolland
Registered manager	Dawn Coyle
Inspector	Susan Atkinson-Millmoor

Inspection date	17/03/2017
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 and young people who use the service receive an excellent level of support, enabling them to progress in the placement, which then transfers to life at home. A parent said: 'I can't fault it, the staff are absolutely wonderful and [name] enjoys it and is content.' The home is led by a strong management team committed to continuous development, and this, supported by a knowledgeable and committed staff team, ensures that the service improves consistently. Short-break stays are well planned and discussed at each handover, where staff are also given the opportunity to reflect on the previous shift. Communication with the family and other services, such as schools, occurs daily and is informative. This ensures that each stay is successful for the individual child or young person and their family. Education is recognised as important by the home. The transfer from home and school is well managed each day, with children and young people being welcomed at the door by staff to ensure that school transport staff can highlight any areas of concern from the journey. When preparing for a child or young person to join the service, a member of the staff team attends the school placement to gain insight into the care needs and behaviour management needs of each individual. This then informs the placement plans, enabling children and young people to feel secure during their stay. Each child or young person has a comprehensive care plan that details their likes and dislikes in a 'This is me' format. This is then supported by relevant information in terms of health, highlighting information on conditions relevant to each child or young person. The plan includes individual communication tools to be used, ensuring that the stay is enjoyable and helpful. This is complemented by an excellent technology room, recognising the relevance of using such equipment to all young people. It also provides a tool for marking celebrations and achievements with photographs and videos, copies of which can be given to families. A social work team manager said: 'They make a huge impact on the children and young people; they are very successful at developing a level of independence with everyone.' Recording has improved and there have been regular reviews of policies and information for staff. For example, flowcharts have been introduced to assist staff with	

the changes made to the risk assessments following the last inspection.

Children and young people are safe at this home. The staff team takes safeguarding seriously and makes prompt referrals when necessary. The home itself is a safe space, with relevant health and safety checks being carried out regularly, including of the external grounds, which are vast. There are facilities in this large home for individual and group activities, and space to recognise the different needs of the age groups using the service.

The leadership and management team consists of strong, creative individuals led by a charismatic leader. The team continually focuses on the needs of the children and young people, but does not sacrifice the learning and development of the staff team. A good example is the recent reviewing of information in relation to allergies, with particular reference to food. All the staff team completed online training, and this was then supported by a visit of a representative from the Food Standards Agency to the staff meeting. The learning was completed by the introduction of information for the cook and picture symbols to be used at each mealtime by staff, children and young people. This demonstrates that the management team understands the need to reinforce information to aid learning. The team uses research effectively to plan developments in the practice of the home and empower its staff to develop areas of expertise and responsibility.

The extensive community involvement seen at the last inspection continues. The home shares its crops every year with local food banks and within the local community. The home successfully engages with community partnerships to develop the external areas of the home, offering supervised young people opportunities to learn and contribute to their community.

There are no requirements or recommendations at this inspection.

Information about this children's home

This children's home provides short-break care and accommodation for up to six young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities. It is operated by the local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
14/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
30/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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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