

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	30/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC035380
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Registered person address	Stockton on Tees Borough Council, 6 Alma Street, STOCKTON-ON-TEES, Cleveland, TS18 2AP

Responsible individual	Mr Shaun McLurg
Registered manager	Mrs Dawn Coyle
Inspector	Ms Julie Rimington

Inspection date	30/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC035380

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The manager and staff team have exceptionally secure and trusting relationships with the children, young people and their families. These are built through consistent care, regular consultation and an aspirational approach to the service they provide.
- The staff team are excellent communicators. They develop insight and knowledge of how the young people communicate. They use this to ensure that young people's views about what happens next is listened to and is the focus of plans for them.
- Placement plans and risks assessments are personalised and regularly reviewed. They include details of the likes and dislikes of the children and young people and how they like to be looked after.
- The processes to introduce a child or young person are thorough, and taken at the pace defined by the child or young person and their family. Similarly, the transitional arrangements made when a young person leaves the service and moves to adult care are well planned and managed.
- The physical environment inside and outside of the home is excellent. The manager and staff team are continuing to look for ways to improve the environment and introduce new experiences for the children and young people.
- The home is exceptionally well managed by an aspirational manager. She manages change and improvement well and has created a nurturing yet challenging work environment. She is supported by a strong senior management team.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The 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
05/03/2015	Interim	Sustained Effectiveness
07/01/2015	Full	Good
06/01/2014	Interim	Good Progress

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	outstanding
Many of the children and young people cannot use verbal communication to let people know what they want or how they feel. The manager and staff team use excellent observational skills and their knowledge of the children and young people to quickly develop trusting relationships with them. This allows staff to understand the non-verbal communication demonstrated. Staff learn how to tell the differences in facial expressions, body posture and audible sounds. This child focused work allows staff to provide exceptional care for these children and young people and ensures they are able to enjoy their stays at the short breaks service. A dedicated education champion allows the young people to experience fun, enjoyable activities which help to meet educational targets. All children and young people go to local schools. The champion has developed positives links with the schools to ensure consistence in behaviour management and supporting the families in ensuring the best possible outcomes for the children and young people. Their interests are identified and activities are developed to ensure that they have new experiences. The use of new technology and the internet are carefully monitored. All staff were aware of the dangers the internet could pose but also promoted the safe use of it. These messages are also given to families, which means children and young people are safer both when on a short break and when	

at home or at school.

The manager and staff team are very good at recognising progression and achievements. Progression charts show how well children and young people are doing in developing skills which will help them in the future. Progression for some is about slight movements which can help them when they are being assisted with intimate care, for others it is about being able to feed themselves, for others it is about being able to make a drink for themselves. These achievements are well recorded and celebrated. Children and young people's self-esteem and resilience is improved by having a sense of achievements. The children and young people also have more control of what is happening to them, therefore progress is making them safer and less vulnerable.

The manager and staff work very closely with families. Family members speak of the staff providing, 'life changing support'. Parents speak of the way staff assist them in managing some of the more challenging and difficult behaviours. One parent also spoke about the positive way her daughter's short break had on her and her younger sibling. Cards and letters from families confirm the high regard the families have for this home and the relationship they have with the manager and staff team.

The manager has secured a working partnership with a local company which has resulted in the company building the children and young people a new garden. They have enjoyed planting vegetables and seeing them grow and have enjoyed the harvest. Children and young people have been encouraged to share produce with their families and the community. The project is now extended to the provision of a wheelchair adapted greenhouse for the spring.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The children and young people are safer as a result of the work they do with staff during their short breaks. Sessions on keeping safe and making positive choices are delivered in a variety of styles to ensure children and young people learn how to protect themselves. The manager has built up excellent working relationships with the community and other local agencies. They take part in helping staff deliver sessions on subjects as diverse as fire safety, sexual health and stranger danger. Those young people with psychological health needs also receive excellent service from local specialists ensuring that those adults who work around the child, young person and their family are doing so in a consistent and safe way.	

The staff have excellent knowledge around child protection and safeguarding. They are extremely proficient at identifying possible signs of child abuse and have in-depth knowledge of the processes that need to be followed to make referrals. The manager is robust in the way she challenges decision making from other agencies where there are safeguarding concerns. Her monitoring and analysis of this ensures that practise is continually improving. There are examples of excellent practise, where staff have repeated exceeded what they would be expected to do to make sure children and young people are safer.

The relationships between children, young people and the staff team are exceptional and allow them to feel, 'they belong', and are safe. Staff team members spoke about how they could recognise small changes in noises or facial expressions. Staff use appropriate touch to allow children and young people to know they are being listened to and use a wide array of skills to ensure they are aware of any concerns.

The manager and staff team complete thorough risk assessments which are personalised and address additional vulnerabilities and risks. The risks are managed by a carefully constructed risk management plan which are linked to a placement plan. This describes the purpose and intent of the short break together with details of how the child or young person likes to be looked after. The level of detail and the way these documents are developed and used in the home ensures consistency of care and management of risk. This allows children and young people to enjoy their short break and be safe.

Given the complex needs of some of the children and young people, a great deal of thought has to be put into ensuring activities and outings are safe. Excellent planning and creativity by the staff ensure the children and young people enjoy an extensive range of activities. These include visits to the seaside, spa days, going to concerts and doing creative activities. The way in which staff plan and manage these activities ensures the children and young people have opportunities to take risks and learn new skills, which they may struggle to do so without their short break. Videos and pictures of these activities demonstrate the progress children and young people have made.

Children and young people are protected further by an aspirational manager who acts as an advocate and champion. She uses evidenced based practice to identify shortfalls in practice within the team of professionals around the child or young person and is confident to ask why tasks or referrals have not been completed. This approach ensures all the team working with this child are accountable and the children and young people are safer as a result.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
The manager is suitably qualified and experienced to hold the position of Registered Manager. Since the last inspection, where there were a number of shortfalls in practice, she has worked hard to ensure all requirements and recommendations were met. She has exceeded what would be expected. She is an aspirational leader who empowers staff and supports her staff team. She has high expectations of them in completing tasks and ensures they are supported through robust supervision and appraisals. She regularly observes practice and monitors files to ensure they are of a high standard. She is creative and innovative, constantly looking for ways to develop new experiences for the children and young people. She is supported by an experienced senior management team who provides her with additional skills and knowledge to help in the well-defined improvement agenda. This has resulted in an exceptional shift in both the quality of care and the progress of the children and young people. Staff speak of the difference it has made having the manager in post and how they are more motivated to ensure children and young people enjoy their short breaks. One of the most significant improvements is the way that information is recorded about young people. Children's files represent the journey they take during their time at the home, recording essential information in a structured way. The manager has developed robust monitoring processes which give her oversight and scrutiny of the recording process. The case files are up-to-date and they provide a unique insight into the lives of the children and young people. The manager has extensive professional networks in the local community. The relationship she has developed with these professionals has a positive impact on the children and young people because of the improved communication links that have been developed and the increased awareness of the roles of these professionals. The local community also support the home, frequently assisting in seasonal fayres and fundraising.	

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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 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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