

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC035439
Inspector	Jackie Line
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Lancashire County Council
Registered person address	PO Box 78 County Hall Fishergate Preston PR1 8XJ
Responsible individual	Brendan Francis Lee
Registered manager	Joan Osgood
Date of last inspection	05/12/2014

Inspection date	17/03/2015
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Previous inspection	outstanding
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection

This home was judged outstanding at the last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has **sustained effectiveness**.

At the last inspection on 5 December 2014 the manager was asked to take account of two recommendations. These related to the maintenance of the home environment, and ensuring that all staff updated their First Aid training. The home is currently undergoing a full programme of refurbishment, and in January 2015 all staff completed a refresher course in First Aid. This demonstrates the manager has taken effective action, and improvements have been made.

One young person has moved on from the home between inspections. This was a positive move in line with their care plan, and staff fully supported their transition to independence. When young people move on they keep in touch, and staff are aware of their progress, as well as any challenges they encounter. Staff offer outreach support and guidance, and professionals compliment them on the quality of the support they provide to help young people adjust to independent living. Furthermore, staff learn from young people's feedback and experiences of leaving care. For example, one young woman reported that the hardest thing has been getting herself up in the mornings because she became so used to staff waking her each day. This information helps to inform future practice as the team review how best to prepare young people for independence.

Young people report they are happy, and that they continue to feel 'very safe' in the home. They identify staff as people they can talk to should they have any worries or concerns. The quality of relationships between staff and young people remains exceptionally strong. Relationships are based on mutual trust and respect, and this enables young people to share sensitive information, knowing they will be listened to. Furthermore, reciprocal relationships enable staff to effectively manage challenging behaviour and work through difficult times. Effective behaviour management strategies are in place, and as a result young people begin to take responsibility for their behaviour, and learn from their mistakes.

Since the last inspection, some young people have displayed unsettled behaviour. This has resulted in missing from home episodes, and engagement in some risk taking behaviours over the last two weeks. One serious incident has not been reported to Ofsted, in line with the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. This means that those with an interest in children's safety and welfare have not been appropriately informed. Risk assessments have been reviewed and updated; contact has now been made with relevant professionals, and a strategy meeting has been requested to ensure there is a multi-agency response to address these concerns. One missing from home interview remains outstanding, and this has not been sufficiently chased up. This is raised as a recommendation to ensure that young people's safety and welfare is fully promoted.

Since the last inspection young people's progress has been largely maintained. Strong links with health professionals has led to improved outcomes for some young people. For example, a young person has attended a dental check-up following the support of the children's looked after nurse to help him overcome a dental phobia. Other young people have benefitted from appropriate sexual health advice, and have been supported to attend a smoking cessation clinic. As a result, young people's health and well-being is effectively promoted because their needs are identified and services provided to meet them.

Staff continue to provide structure and routine to encourage participation in education, and in leisure activities. Some young people have struggled to maintain their attendance at school, and this is being addressed. For example, one young person who refused to attend school on Mondays has recently started to attend every day because of the support and encouragement of staff. Where young people have been excluded from mainstream school, alternative education provision is identified quickly. Although they remain engaged with education, this is not on a full-time basis. The Registered Manager has not been sufficiently proactive in seeking a review of this arrangement, and plans about how to progress this are unclear. This means young people are not being wholly supported to achieve their full potential.

Young people continue to enjoy a range of opportunities and experiences that help to build confidence and self-esteem. For example, organised activities over the Christmas period were highly successful, including a 5-a-side football evening, and a trip to the Christmas Markets. Staff and young people are already planning trips out over Easter, and everyone is looking forward to a summer holiday at Centre Parcs.

The business support officer has left since the last inspection, and this post is currently vacant. Administrative adjustments are being made, and this inspection identified that some aspects of record keeping require greater oversight and organisation to ensure that previously high standards are maintained. The Registered Manager is aware of this and is now taking steps to address this through monitoring processes, and at team meetings.

One requirement and three recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection.

Information about this children's home

A local authority operates this children's home. This service is registered for up to six young people of either gender, aged between 11 and 17 years of age. The home cares for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
05/12/2014	Full	outstanding
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
06/01/2014	Full	outstanding
21/01/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress

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
30 (2001)	ensure that the registered person shall notify, without delay, the persons indicated, in respect of the events listed in Schedule 5 (regulation 30(1))	24/04/2015

Recommendations

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

- ensure that where a child goes missing and there is concern for their welfare, staff arrange a meeting between the child and responsible authority in private to consider the reasons for the child going missing. The home considers with the responsible authority what action should be taken to prevent the child going missing in future, specifically return home

interviews are arranged and completed without delay (NMS 5.9)

- ensure that children who have been excluded from school have access to appropriate education so they are supported and enabled to resume full-time education, in particular young people's education needs are reviewed and plans made to secure engagement in full-time learning without delay (NMS 8.8)
- ensure the manager regularly monitors, in line with regulations, all records kept in the home to identify any concerns about specific incidents, and to identify patterns and trends. Immediate action is taken to address any issues raised by this monitoring (NMS 21.2).

What inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspections 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

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.