

## Children's homes inspection - Full

|                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>           | <b>12/10/2015</b>                   |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | <b>SC035648</b>                     |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>        | <b>Full</b>                         |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>         | <b>Secure Unit</b>                  |
| <b>Registered person</b>         | <b>Durham County Council</b>        |
| <b>Registered person address</b> | <b>County Hall, DURHAM, DH1 5UL</b> |

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Responsible individual</b> | <b>Mrs Carole Payne</b>  |
| <b>Registered manager</b>     | <b>Ms Gillian Palin</b>  |
|                               | <b>Mr Selwyn Morgans</b> |
| <b>Inspector</b>              | <b>Paul Scott</b>        |

|                                                                                                 |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>                                                                          | <b>12/10/2015</b>             |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                            | <b>Improved effectiveness</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                 | <b>None</b>                   |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                          |                               |
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b> | <b>Good</b>                   |
| The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.            |                               |
| <b>how well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                              | <b>Good</b>                   |
| <b>the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                   |
| <b>outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>                                    | <b>Good</b>                   |

**SC035648**

## **Summary of findings**

### **The children's home provision is good because:**

- Young people grow in self-esteem and self-confidence because they receive care and support that reflects their individual needs and personal circumstances. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and behaviours. This supports their emotional development.
- Relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive. This creates a caring and nurturing environment that ensures that they feel safe and secure.
- Young people are cared for by experienced and skilled staff. Partnership working between staff and other professionals means that young people experience good quality and integrated care.
- Procedures and practice within the centre supports the safety of young people. Good training of staff raises their awareness of areas including child sexual exploitation and self-harm, developing their ability to work with young people well. Information is shared swiftly with the Local Safeguarding Children Board which supports keeping young people safe.
- Staff practice in the use of behaviour management is good. The use of incentives and sanctions promotes positive behaviour and the use of single separation and physical restraint is appropriate with young people being aware of the need for such action.
- Leadership and management is effective and there is a clear focus on driving a well thought out improvement agenda. The new manager provides good leadership to staff and has brought about a strong child-focused ethos, which is being fully embraced by the staff team.
- Managers and staff have managed change well. Young people's welfare and well-being has remained the number one priority, despite a number of challenges they have faced.
- The manager was aware of, and has been proactive in addressing, a number of shortfalls identified at this inspection and has relevant plans in place to ensure outstanding matters are rigorously addressed.

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

### 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 (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Due date   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child; and are kept up to date. (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 19/11/2015 |
| <p>12 The Protection of Children Standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard, in particular, the standard in paragraph (1), the registered person must ensure-</p> <p>(2)(d) the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p> <p>This is with specific reference to ensuring staff are diligent in recognising and reporting any damage which poses a risk to children and ensuring it is repaired immediately.</p> | 16/10/2015 |
| The registered person must ensure that within 48 hours of the use of any measure of control or discipline, the registered person, or a person who is authorised by the registered person to do so, has signed the record to confirm it is accurate. (Regulation 35 (3)(b))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 19/11/2015 |
| The registered person must ensure that all employees complete an appropriate induction, receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year. (Regulation 33(1)(a) and (4)(b-c))                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 19/11/2015 |

### Recommendations

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

- Ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. In particular, ensure the quality of the food provided is of a good standard. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 15, paragraph 3.8)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their support plans must include details of the steps the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- The home's records on each child represent a significant contribution to their life history. Staff should understand their important role in encouraging the child to reflect on and understand their history, according to their age and understanding. This specifically relates to ensuring internal support plans are detailed and comprehensive. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.5)
- Records must be kept detailing when all young people go missing from the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.31)
- Ensure that the home can protect the safety of all children accommodated there and maintain a secure environment; in particular that a full audit and assessment of the environment is undertaken and identified shortfalls are addressed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 19, paragraph 3.34)
- Make best use of information from independent monitoring (regulation 44) to ensure continuous improvement. This is with specific reference to ensuring that managers who are responsible each house complete an action plan which identifies how the shortfalls identified by the independent visitor are to be addressed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, ensure the swift implementation of functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics, supported by a more efficient ICT infrastructure. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.18)
- Ensure the ethos of the home supports each child to learn; specifically, review the use of the rewards and sanction system in education to ensure young people understand how, for example, their effort, attitude to learning and behaviour during lessons may have positive and negative consequences which will be reflected in their scores. This in turn should lead to a more meaningful and accurate assessment of their behaviours during education. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 29, paragraph 5.18)

## Full report

### Information about this children's home

This secure children's home is managed by a local authority. It is approved by the Department for Education to restrict young people's liberty. The children's home can accommodate up to 42 young people, who are aged between 10 and 17 years. It provides care and accommodation for up to 24 young people placed by the Youth Justice Board and 18 places for young people accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are placed by local authorities. Admission of any young person under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 who are under 13 years of age requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Education is provided on site in dedicated facilities.

This inspection has the purpose of informing the Secretary of State on the continuing suitability for this provision to operate as a secure unit to restrict children's liberty.

### Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement   |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 27/01/2015      | CH - Interim    | Improved effectiveness |
| 17/09/2014      | CH - Full       | Good                   |
| 28/01/2014      | CH - Interim    | Good Progress          |
| 07/08/2013      | CH - Full       | Good                   |

## Inspection Judgements

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Judgement grade |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people make good progress because they receive personalised care that reflects and responds to their complex needs. Staff work with a multi-disciplinary health and social care team to deliver bespoke interventions. These take account of young people's individual circumstances, challenging behaviours and specific support needs, encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions. Young people say they enjoy these intervention programmes because they provide them with the opportunity to reflect on the reasons that brought them to secure care. One young person said, 'I look at things differently now. I can see why things were going wrong and I'm dealing with things.' Young people grow in self-esteem and confidence because they are encouraged to learn alternative ways of expressing and managing their feelings and frustrations.</p> <p>Staff are extremely skilled and competent in identifying antecedents to changes in young people's behaviours and revise their practice to reflect these changes. The positive impact of this regular review process is somewhat compromised because internal care planning systems are weak. Staff use both electronic and handwritten recording systems to devise and update training plans and care plans. These are not combined to detail young people's progress or achievements. Some young people's case files do not include all up to date statutory documentation as required, such as secure accommodation review information. This means that plans do not effectively contribute to young people's understanding of their history or provide a comprehensive synopsis of their placement.</p> <p>Young people enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff. They say they are helped to understand their backgrounds and recognise the progress they make. One young person said, 'Being here has turned something bad into something good. Staff don't judge me in fact some have inspired me to change. I have learnt a lot and I am a different person.' These strong relationships enable staff to identify risks that are detrimental to young people's safety and the welfare of others. This dynamic approach to assessing risk is positive though staff do not always fully record risk management strategies. This shortfall means that risk management documents lack detail, though there is effective verbal communication between staff to ensure a consistent approach is maintained.</p> <p>Partnership working arrangements between social care staff, nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists are a considerable strength of the service. Young people access emotional well-being, mental health and clinical forensic services without delay. Health assessments commence on admission and young people experience an</p> |                 |

integrated approach to identifying and addressing their health needs. Health intervention plans are not combined to provide young people with a clear overview of their needs.

Young people's day-to-day experiences are positive because their views and wishes are actively sought and taken into account. One young person said, 'We are asked what we think about things and staff listen to what we say but we can't just have what we want.' However, young people are frustrated by the poor quality and nutrition of some of the meals provided.

Resettlement is well planned and supported. Case managers work in partnership with other agencies such as local authorities and youth offending services. This ensures young people experience a smooth transition from the centre. One external professional said, 'The centre forges excellent links with other agencies such as colleges and local authorities. These help young people to find their feet when they leave.'

Staff encourage young people to maintain regular contact with their families. They recognise and understand the distress some young people experience as a result of being separated from their families. Young people say they appreciate the support they receive from staff. One young person said, 'Staff know how important it is for me to see my family and they always do everything they can to make sure this happens.' As a result, young people do not feel isolated. This enhances their self-esteem and sense of well-being.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Judgement grade |
| <b>How well children and young people are helped and protected</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>Young people's safety is a high priority. They are protected at all times through effective procedures and staff responses to a range of behaviours being displayed. Young people state that they feel safe, that they can talk to staff and are listened to if they wish to raise concerns about their care or safety. Grumbles books show that staff are responsive to young people's views and common issues are raised and discussed within the senior management team. Staff have a good awareness of the governments 'Prevent agenda' and there are systems in place to report any concerns to managers.</p> <p>A good range of intervention programmes are in place which help to raise young people's awareness of their behaviours and the risks relating to them. For example, interventions and specialist programmes support young people that have experienced sexual exploitation, and have led to significantly improved outcomes</p> |                 |

for them. Schedules of training and support for both staff and young people in this area have been flexible and considered. This ensures that young people's needs are responded to well and staff develop the best ways of working with them.

Training in safeguarding procedures is updated regularly. Concerns are reported to managers and to the appropriate organisations. Internal investigations are thorough when required and reports are detailed. Clear chronologies of events show good links with the police, local authorities and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) who maintain good oversight with regards all aspects of safeguarding practice. This helps to promote and support the safety of young people.

There have been three incidents of young people absconding since the last inspection. These have been during planned and approved visits to the community. Staff have taken appropriate action to secure a quick and safe return. Absence records are maintained and although the quality of these records has improved, the majority were incomplete and did not contain details of the young person's return or the outcome of the interview undertaken by an independent person.

Self-harm records show that staff quickly respond where there are concerns about the safety of young people. Information packs, which contain strategies for the management of self-harm, are regularly reviewed and considered by both senior management and health professionals. Staff are well trained in responding to such behaviours, being aware of the risks to themselves and the young people. Training has helped to develop staff's awareness of 'the story behind the child' and has further improved staff skills in managing high risk behaviour. Risk assessments, which are routinely implemented, support night staff's observations of young people. Collectively, these actions promote a robust approach to keeping young people safe.

The 'Brills' behaviour management system is an incentive scheme that is well understood by the young people and staff. A recent survey carried out by the home highlighted some inconsistencies with its use but these are being worked through with staff and young people. The reward system clearly shows what young people can gain from working hard and behaving throughout their day. Targets within the system are individualised and pertinent to the development and improvement of young people's specific behaviours. Negative behaviours can result in sanctions which are proportionate and fair. Records of sanctions are not consistent. They occasionally lack detail.

Single separation is used occasionally with young people for their safety and the safety of others. They understand the need for this action stating, 'It gives you time to think about your behaviour.' Senior managers monitor its use closely and examine trends and patterns with correlation to sanctions and physical interventions.

Restraint of young people supports their safety and well-being and is in line with regulation. The daily monitoring of such interventions is an effective way of examining incidents, as well as staff practice. This helps to develop staff practice and examine particular triggers for the young person to consider. There has been a decrease in the use of restraint in the previous six months.

Staff recruitment supports the safety of young people well. Checks completed prior to staff starting at the centre are robust.

Young people are protected by an extensive range of health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine checks. Detailed records are kept and oversight is maintained by a dedicated facilities manager. The manager has recognised and is addressing the need to improve this system to ensure there is access to relevant information in the absence of the facilities manager.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Judgement grade |
| <b>The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>The current manager has been in post since 12 June 2015. He has significant experience of working with vulnerable and challenging young people and is effectively adapting these skills to working in a secure setting. He is highly qualified and has recently completed the process to become Registered Manager. He is extremely child-focused and demonstrates a strong commitment to providing young people with outstanding care and educational experiences. Staff recognise this and are extremely complimentary about the direction of travel which the home is taking and they talk with enthusiasm about the ethos of care which is being promoted and delivered.</p> <p>The manager has taken an analytical approach to his new position. He has rigorously assessed the homes performance and has developed a comprehensive understanding of what is done well and what needs to improve. He has driven a number of changes which has impacted positively on the home and the care of young people. For example, the staff team have been reorganised to ensure each of the houses has the right people, with the right skills, working directly with the young people. Young people have clearly recognised the benefits of this and say it is much easier to speak to, and get the support they need from, the right people. This is only one of a number of developmental strategies which are clearly outlined in the recently reviewed development plan and business continuity plan.</p> <p>Managers and staff have faced a number of challenges since the last inspection. This includes a sudden increase in occupancy and changes to staffing and the</p> |                 |

management team. More recently, work has started on the door replacement programme. This has meant that young people have had to decant from one house to another to facilitate these important works. This has had an unsettling effect on some young people who have found it difficult to cope with the change. This has on occasions shown in their behaviour. This, combined with a lack of ownership for some aspects of the environment has taken its toll on the physical environment. A number of areas are looking tired and damaged. The majority of these shortfalls have been reported via the homes maintenance procedures and there is an ongoing redecoration and refurbishment programme in place. However, it was clear that staff have on occasions failed to exercise rigour in ensuring hazards which may pose a risk to young people and staff are immediately addressed. For example, one camera and a number of ceiling tiles in the education corridor were awaiting repair and a wooden fence in the courtyard had loose timber. The manager did take immediate action by reiterating to staff their responsibilities, replacing the camera and ceiling tiles and taking the fence down. He also recognises the need to complete a full audit of the environment and improve maintenance reporting and staff accountability.

The home's Statement of Purpose was reviewed and updated in September 2015. This is comprehensive document which sets out the aims and objectives and the range of services provided to young people. These are being consistently achieved and are being delivered in practice; a fact that was confirmed by a number of stakeholders who spoke very positively about the home. This information is supplemented in the form of a child-friendly children's guide which provides young people with information about the home, including how to raise a complaint. Discussion with young people confirmed that the complaints processes are known and understood and followed freely when issues cannot be resolved as a grumble. Young people also said that having managers in the houses meant that things were dealt with quicker, which has been a source of frustration in the past.

There has been a real drive to appoint a full and permanent staff team and reduce the need for agency staff. Staffing numbers are sufficient to meet the day-to-day needs of young people. The manager is in the process of restructuring the staff team and is hopeful that this will lead to an increase in the number of staff caring directly for young people. It is acknowledged that achieving the right levels of staff has been a challenge at times. The team has responded well to this challenge and has worked exceptionally hard to ensure young people's care, safety and well-being has not been compromised. However, the necessity of having staff on shift has meant that the normally rigorous induction programme has not been consistently followed. Staff did not see this as a concern and felt that the immediate support of experienced colleagues had provided them with good support. Also, a number of staff have not received regular practice related supervision or had their performance appraised. The manager is aware of these issues and has been proactive in his response. He has introduced a number of monitoring systems to ensure staff receive the level of support they should have. For example, supervision and appraisal is now monitored by senior staff and has

resulted in a gradual improvement over recent months. Also, he has further strengthened the induction procedure by introducing a 'buddying' system. In addition to the three weeks spent training and preparing for their job they will have the opportunity to shadow an experienced colleague during the initial stages of working on the units.

The majority of staff are qualified and there are good arrangements in place to ensure those who are not can acquire a relevant qualification. Staff are provided with good training opportunities. Mandatory training is regularly updated and is complemented by a range of needs-led training such as suicide and self-harm. Staff are currently undertaking training in dealing with trauma. This training has encouraged staff to reflect and explore their values, roles and responsibilities and their approach to caring for young people. Staff spoke enthusiastically about this training using phrases like, 'It has made me go back to basics' and 'I have started looking beyond the behaviour and trying to understand the cause.' This is complemented by individual and group reflective supervision which is delivered by a professional worker. She said, 'I am seeing an improved understanding and awareness from staff. They are seeing the child first and the behaviour second, which is helping them to address the cause. Young people are clearly benefitting from this approach.'

Quality assurance is an integral part of all aspects of operations. The homes performance is rigorously scrutinised by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The home is currently given the highest rating for safety and security by the YJB. The youth justice monitor confirmed that the home is performing well and that she is very impressed with the new manager who is diligent in discharging his duties. The manager is in the process of streamlining a number of internal monitoring processes. He has recently completed a review of the quality of care which is analytical and provides a good insight into areas for improvement. These processes are supplemented by monthly visits to each of the units by an independent person, who is usually accompanied by one of the local authority's corporate parents. Reports are completed for each unit and submitted to Ofsted in a timely manner. Although the quality of these reports has generally improved, in particular with regards to encapsulating the views of young people and stakeholders, they can at times lack consistency. For example, the report requires the unit manager to provide an action plan, which clearly sets out how they will address any identified shortfalls. These are rarely completed and while the majority of shortfalls are addressed, there are occasions when they have been repeated the following month.

All of the recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Managers understand the progress young people are making because they routinely discuss and monitor young people's care. 'Team around the child' meetings are regularly held and well used to consider and develop specific strategies in response to young people's known and changing needs. Communication between different departments is improving as the manager

becomes more aware of the inherent barriers which exist within such a large service. Managers acknowledge that this is work in progress and are optimistic that their efforts to achieve one cohesive centre will be achieved.

Young people benefit from a wealth of resources which are routinely available. This is complimented by extremely strong working partnerships with a wide range of care, health and safeguarding professionals and agencies. These are well used to ensure young people gain maximum benefit from their time spent in the home. This holistic approach has helped young people to develop an understanding of their lives and address some of the prevalent behaviours which resulted in custody. The home has started to track young people when they leave, as a means of evaluating how much the home has impacted on their lives when external controls are removed. While this piece of work is in its infancy, there are clear signs that the work staff do is having a positive impact on the majority of young people.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Judgement grade |
| <b>Outcomes in education and related learning activities</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Good</b>     |
| <p>On arrival most young people are swiftly assessed to determine their levels of ability and identify any learning needs they may have. A minority however, arriving during the three week summer holiday period, had to wait too long for initial assessment.</p> <p>Initial assessment arrangements continue to improve and are outstanding. Education managers are relentless, going the extra mile to ensure thorough and comprehensive assessments are in place and monitored closely; diagnostic assessments are available when appropriate and very good support is provided from the educational psychology service, adolescent mental health team and the local primary care trust. A newly assigned speech and language therapist ensures young people receive focused assessments which is a very welcome development. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures resources are available to those children with additional learning needs. Education health care (EHC) plans and special educational needs (SEN) statements are reviewed carefully and new plans instigated when required. The head of education works diligently and successfully with host local authorities to ensure young people receive the required resources and support they are entitled to.</p> <p>Personal and social development is an important aspect and every opportunity is made across the curriculum to help young people develop confidence and self-esteem. Communication and interpersonal skills are re-enforced in life skills work and noticeably in vocational areas such as hair and beauty, a bespoke 'building</p> |                 |

futures' preparation for work programme and construction. Young people are encouraged to continue with their studies when they arrive and several young people are currently working to complete GCSE course work and examinations. In 2014-15, 17 GCSEs were awarded and currently one young person is receiving intensive tuition for 'A' level qualifications in mathematics, physics and chemistry. For those young people of lower ability, accredited AQA and NOCN units are available and nearly all young people achieve unit awards in core subjects such as mathematics, science, information computer technology (ICT) and English, and in practical areas such as art, food technology, physical education, hair and beauty and construction. Literacy has been prioritised effectively and there are very good examples where reading and vocabulary are embedded into subject areas. Young people develop their reading skills markedly throughout their stay. The introduction of functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English has been slow to progress, not helped by limitations with the quality of ICT resources. Plans to introduce a new level of qualification for ICT are also in development and requires speedy resolution.

Pupil progress is now tracked effectively across all curriculum areas and individuals are made aware of how well they are doing during lessons and in more depth at half-termly progress meetings. Individual learning plans are comprehensive, holding all relevant and up-to-date information about each young person's learning pathway. In 2014-15, nearly all young people achieved better progress in mathematics at national curriculum levels than the national average in mainstream schools. Generally, all young people are making good gains relative to their starting points, the majority of which are low for their age.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good in most lessons. Outcomes of teaching and learning observations by senior managers and the local authority school improvement partner have also identified much good practice and these findings correlate closely with the profile of teaching observed during inspection. No inadequate teaching was observed, and there were outstanding features demonstrated in English, physical education, ICT and construction specifically. Teachers explain the aims and focus of the lesson and settle quickly down to work. Resources are well matched to address the range of needs in the group and expectations for work to be completed to high standards are clearly expressed. Young people are encouraged to be inquisitive and to develop their ideas with each other. They respond well to positive feedback which motivates them and contributes to their progress. Good progress has been made to ensure programmes are individualised and that individual learners' work files reflect learning and are kept tidy, are well organised and sequential. Marking generally gives constructive and clear comments. The weakest teaching sessions lacked structure, purpose and pace with considerable time lost from the start of the lesson trying to motivate the group to engage in the planned activities, which are not always related to the lesson plan. Young people working at lower ability levels are not always encouraged to work on more challenging activities once initial targets are completed. On occasion this opens up opportunities for poor behaviour

that becomes a distraction for those who are trying to complete their work.

The small team of teaching assistants (TAs) provide very good support to teaching staff and are highly regarded as key personnel within education. They demonstrate sound teaching and learning support skills in a range of subjects, for example, physical education, food technology, English and mathematics. Relationships with young people are very good and positive interactions during lessons help the large majority of young people to stay focused and keep on track.

The curriculum is appropriate and staff have worked well together to coordinate a broad and diverse range of subjects and activities. Nearly all subjects provide good opportunities for young people to achieve accreditation at entry level and above. Core curriculum subjects are interspersed well throughout the day with more creative and practical lessons. Vocational subjects are currently limited to construction, food technology and hair and beauty. There is a strong focus on transition planning demonstrated in a variety of ways during the school day and young people are encouraged to talk about their plans and aspirations for the future. The 'Brighter Futures' programme delivered by a local business franchise, provides young people with a highly practical understanding of the attributes that employers want. Delivered in an informal and engaging style the trainers provide focused 'preparation for work' skills, such as interview techniques through role play and lively informative debates about the job market. When possible, young people attend work experience as a result of their participation in the workshop.

Practical work in art is of a good standard and current GCSE portfolios demonstrate sound teaching with thoughtful and creative application of media and drawing techniques to develop project work. Electronic boards are used effectively in English, science and art to promote participation and to extend and enrich young people's interest and knowledge. The use of ICT generally however is limited because the equipment is outdated and access to up-to-date software is poor. Most teaching rooms are attractive and well maintained. The library is well resourced with a good range of age-specific literature and research books. Some work by young people is displayed, more so in the practical areas such as art and hair and beauty. However, some practical spaces are untidy, cluttered and disorganised; the cookery room requires cleaning. These areas are used frequently across the week and at weekends by the school and the residential unit and should be maintained better by all users.

Work experience and opportunities for approved visits are used constructively to develop young people's independent skills and to offer experiences of work. Good attention is taken to match placements that might be of interest and successful. It is established practice for young people who wish to continue with studies when they leave to visit further education colleges, either to review types of courses offered or to attend formal interviews. One young person is currently studying sports at the local college while living semi-independently in the step-down unit.

He acts as a mentor in PE lessons when not at college and hopes to go to university.

A good range of enrichment opportunities take place. During themed activity weeks in holiday periods, external facilitators are commissioned to deliver a range of programmes such as dog handling, animal and bird care, street dance, art and crafts and cooking. School-based fun days, fundraising activities, sports days and celebration events are popular and held across the school year. A school council is in place meeting regularly during school time where young people are encouraged to provide ideas about special activities and resources. An accredited life skills programme is delivered jointly by care and education staff. An effective interventions programme during the school day and after school includes issues about relationships, anger management and citizenship. Additional sessions are delivered as optional workshops during the school day which cover a range of personal, social and health education topics including, for example, sex and relationships, drugs education and risky behaviours, and child sexual exploitation.

Education staff attend 'team around the child' meetings and transition planning is discussed from the beginning of a young person's placement. Teachers also attend forward placements with young people if required and ensure their academic course work is sent on to new training or education establishments. An external careers adviser from the local authority provides excellent advice and guidance to young people in preparation for moving on. She agrees an action plan and undertakes follow-up work with a young person's prospective keyworker in the forwarding local authority to support a smooth transition. Individual sessions include help with college applications, discussion about career options and potential barriers and arranging visits if possible.

Attendance is consistently good and, for those who cannot attend education, teaching support and appropriate work is provided on the house units. The school is unable to identify numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences on a daily and weekly basis so cannot evidence whether absences are for mandatory reasons or are school refusals. This detail is not always picked up during handover meetings. Some disruption takes place during the school day when young people leave or are returned to lessons at midpoint or very close to the end of a lesson to attend appointments. This is unhelpful. Behaviour is generally good and most young people and staff have developed positive relationships based on respect and good humour. A minority of young people use inappropriate and offensive language which is always challenged. The rewards and sanctions system across the home does not helpfully reflect or support the promotion or importance of education. Young people like the system but the focus on earning top points in education is not always required or relevant. In these instances it is difficult for teachers to keep young people motivated and on track in lessons because whatever points they earn in the lesson will not impact significantly on the overall incentive scheme outcomes for the young person.

The local authority provides good support to the head teacher and contributes to quality assurance processes. Staff receive good professional development opportunities and are encouraged to attend subject specific network meetings with colleagues in mainstream schools.

## 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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children 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 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto: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 [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2015