

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC036026
Inspector	Monica Hargreaves
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Sheffield City Council
Registered person address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall Pinstone Street SHEFFIELD S1 2HH
Responsible individual	Jayne Louise Ludlam
Registered manager	Patrick Michael McGeeney
Date of last inspection	16/12/2013

Inspection date	09/05/2014
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Previous inspection	inadequate progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	There have not been any enforcement actions.

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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Young people are well cared for in a nurturing environment and as a result, they make good progress overall from their individual starting point on admission to the home. There are robust arrangements in place to ensure that young people are kept safe in the home and supported to be as safe as possible when they are away from the home. Young people themselves report that they feel safe. Staff manage young people's behaviour effectively, helping young people to learn how to manage conflict in their own lives and ensuring that the likelihood of challenging behaviour is minimised. Young people's health needs are identified and generally well met. All young people have an education placement and attend regularly, maximising their opportunity to achieve. Young people have plans for later life that include further education and training.

Staff are competent and work well together. They quickly develop a good understanding of young people's needs when they arrive in the home and they put in place detailed care and risk management plans to ensure that there are clearly identified goals they can help young people to achieve.

The home is managed effectively to ensure positive outcomes for young people. The management monitoring arrangements are robust, ensuring that there is good

oversight of the care that is given to young people and the progress they make. The manager has a clear commitment to well-being of the young people who are cared for in the home. He has a very good understanding of the home's strengths and areas that require improvement. He routinely addresses all the requirements and recommendations that are made at inspections or that are identified through the monitoring process, in order to ensure that the service continues to improve for the benefit of young people.

Two recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to young people's health and activities.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home, which provides care and accommodation for up to five young people from 11 to 16 years who experience emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/12/2013	Interim	inadequate progress
17/07/2013	Full	good
21/02/2013	Interim	good progress
01/11/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure that children understand their health needs, how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to make informed decisions about their own health (NMS 6.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Young people make good progress over time in this home. They are able to develop and sustain positive relationships with staff and as a result their sense of self-esteem and confidence grows. All young people have a clear understanding of their history and background and they benefit emotionally from maintaining links with family and friends. Some young people have re-established contact with relatives that they had not been in touch with for some time while other young people have benefitted from improved levels of contact with their family. This helps to sustain young people's sense of identity.

Young people move into the home in a planned way. This benefits them emotionally as it enables them to visit the home and to meet other young people and staff before they move in. Young people also generally leave the home in a planned way, returning home or moving into foster placements or semi-independence. The planning enables young people to feel supported at a time of transition and helps to ensure the success of their future placement. Some older young people who have moved into independent settings, have kept in touch with staff for some time after they have left the home. This indicates that they have developed positive, supportive relationships with members of staff and are confident that staff remain interested in their welfare.

Young people report that they understand how to stay healthy. For example, they generally eat a healthy diet and they understand about the risks attached to smoking and using alcohol or drugs. All young people attend routine health appointments and some young people work with professionals from the psychology services. Consequently, their general health and emotional well-being are monitored. Most young people engage well with workers from the substance misuse team who visit the home and some young people have also attended smoking cessation sessions. However, some young people still smoke and use drugs or alcohol at times which has a negative impact on their health.

Although these are available to them, young people do not get involved in regular, structured activities choosing instead to spend their leisure time visiting friends. All young people have an identified education provision that is appropriate to their individual needs. Their attendance and engagement with education improves over time and is generally good. This enables young people to make progress and they are all working towards examinations. Young people develop the practical and emotional skills they will need for future independence and they have plans in place for further education and employment.

Quality of care

good

Young people are well cared for by a competent team of staff who have a very good understanding of their needs. They benefit from the positive relationships that they have with staff. Detailed care and risk management plans ensure that young people's needs are clearly identified and enable staff to support young people appropriately. These plans are developed from the authority's overall care plans and are discussed and agreed with young people. All plans are regularly reviewed to monitor young people's progress and ensure that they reflect their emerging needs.

Staff work well together which provides consistency to young people and supports their progress. Staff also work very well with families and professionals from a range of other agencies, ensuring that young people have the support they need to make progress and that there is a consistent approach to their care. Relatives and professionals report that they are very happy with the care given to young people and confirm that staff make sure that they are fully involved in all the decisions that are made about young people.

Staff ensure that young people themselves are regularly consulted about their individual care plans which ensures that they understand and contribute to the care planning process. Young people are also consulted about the general running of the home. They confirm that changes have been made in the home as a result of consultation. This enables them to feel that they are listened to and supports their sense of self-worth.

Staff work very effectively with education providers to ensure that an appropriate provision is made available for young people. They liaise closely with schools and other education settings thereafter to resolve any difficulties and support young people in education. Consequently, young people make steady progress overall. As a result of the support they have from staff, some young people who had been out of education for some time before they came to live in the home, have been able to attend much more regularly. They have developed plans for further education and training. This improves their chances in later life.

The home's arrangements for the storage and administration of medication are robust, ensuring that young people are protected and have medicines when they need them.

Young people benefit from living in a home that is maintained to a very good standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise their rooms and to choose the decoration in the communal areas. This helps to give them a sense of ownership and encourages them to take care of the fabric of the house. The home is suitably located in a residential area. Young people are able to access shops, schools and leisure facilities and good transport links enable them to travel independently to visit friends and family.

Keeping children and young people safe good

The home's arrangements for safeguarding young people are effective. Staff training in child protection is kept up to date and the home has a clear safeguarding procedure which staff understand. Any concerns that are identified are dealt with effectively and reported promptly in order to ensure that young people are safe. Young people themselves report that they feel safe in the home and say that staff talk to them about safety in the community. Relatives and professionals also report that they are confident that young people are 'very safe' in the home. Young people understand that bullying is not tolerated. They confirm that they talk about this issue in their house meetings and say that if there are problems between individual young people, 'staff deal with it' quickly. This contributes to young people's sense of safety in the home. Young people understand how to make a complaint. They report that they feel confident about letting staff know if they have a concern as they know that staff treat these seriously.

Staff manage challenging behaviour well and as a result there is little need for physical intervention. There has been one incident since the last inspection. Staff set appropriate boundaries for young people and help them to learn how to manage anger and conflict in their own lives in a positive way, in order to lessen the likelihood of their behaviour becoming challenging. As a result of the way staff work with them, young people's behaviour improves over time in the home and they generally behave appropriately towards one another and staff. This contributes to the overall safety of all young people and staff.

The home has a robust protocol for managing unauthorised absences. Risks are clearly identified in young people's individual plans. This information is shared appropriately with professionals from relevant agencies, with whom the home have developed strong links. This close partnership working helps to ensure that risks are managed and minimised. Staff have worked well with some young people who had a history of going missing from home or care before they came to live in the home. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in these incidents and young people are safer. Staff have also worked effectively to help to reduce the offending behaviour that some young people had been involved in before they came to live in the home. This supports more positive outcomes for young people.

All new staff are thoroughly vetted before they come into contact with the home to ensure that they are safe to work with young people. Visitors to the home are also checked. These arrangements protect young people as they prevent unsuitable individuals gaining access to the home.

The home itself is kept physically safe for young people, staff and visitors. This is achieved through a robust system of health and safety risk assessments and checks on the environment and equipment.

Leadership and management

good

The home is well managed. It benefits from having a manager and assistant manager who are both suitably qualified and very experienced. The manager is registered with Ofsted. He provides strong leadership to the team and ensures that all staff are kept up to date with changes in legislation. The assistant manager manages the home effectively in the manager's absence, ensuring that it continues to run smoothly.

The Statement of Purpose is detailed and clearly sets out the home's objectives. It is regularly reviewed and amended to reflect changes in the Children's Homes Regulations.

Young people benefit from being cared for by a very experienced and consistent team of staff. Care staff are qualified and competent and have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs. This enables them to target the work they do with young people effectively in order to help them to achieve positive outcomes. Staff report that they have regular supervision and say that the support they get from their managers is 'very good - fantastic'. They also report that morale in the team is now good and that they work together very well. This consistent approach benefits young people.

Staff confirm that their training opportunities continue to be good, enabling them to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date. Additional training has been provided to support staff in their care of young people when a need is identified, for example staff have recently done additional training in issues of self harm and substance misuse. Care staff have a very positive view of the young people they look after. They respect young people as individuals and have high aspirations for them. They demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that young people are safe and supported to reach their individual targets.

The care of young people is closely monitored by the home's managers and the independent visitor. Managers and staff track the progress that young people make from their individual starting point on admission to the home. They take action to ensure that young people have the support and resources they need to succeed. Young people, relatives and professionals are regularly consulted as part of the management monitoring process and their feedback is used to drive improvements in the home.

The information that is held about young people is well managed and stored safely to protect young people's right to confidentiality. Young people are encouraged to read and contribute to their files so that they understand what is in their records and their views can be incorporated into them.

Overall the home has good relationships with neighbours. Any issues that arise are responded to promptly by the manager to ensure that these relationships remain positive. This benefits young people as it helps them to feel safe in their local community.

Two requirements were made at the previous inspection. These related to consultation with young people and stakeholders and the planning and matching of placements of young people. Both requirements are met. This has improved the quality of care and young people's experiences in the home, by ensuring that all young people are appropriately placed and that the views of young people and others are regularly sought and used to improve the service. The four recommendations that were made at the previous inspection have also been fully addressed, securing further improvements for young people. The manager has ensured that staff training in safeguarding has been renewed and that they have a clear understanding of the home's procedure for safeguarding. Staff have developed young people's placement plans with them and reviewed them regularly to ensure that they are up to date. All young people are in education and are making progress towards achieving their individual goals.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

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.