

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Unique reference number	SC036240
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Patricia Topliss
Inspector	Ros Chapman

Inspection date	20/12/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. Children and young people are happy and safe in this home. They have positive relationships with staff, who know them well and understand their needs. Consequently, children and young people continue to benefit from living here. Some have made exceptional progress in the last few months, particularly in relation to reducing the number of unauthorised absences or going missing from the home. The level of unauthorised absences was high at the last full inspection. This has significantly reduced, and is now a rare occurrence. This has been achieved by the manager and staff listening to, and working with, young people and those people who are important in their lives, so that risks have been reduced or eliminated. In response to one of the recommendations raised at the last inspection, there is also a more consistent approach to requests for return home interviews when young people have been either missing or had unauthorised absences. Young people are much safer as a result of these actions, and no-one is currently deemed at risk of sexual exploitation. A social worker commented: 'Staff provide really good wraparound support. It is a good, robust service.' Children's and young people's interests are promoted well. One young person keeps chickens, and is very proud of this. Another young person enjoys roller-skating and is enabled to do this frequently. As well as improving her skills and self-esteem, this also facilitates making friends in the community. Friendships are encouraged. Some staff have particular skills and use these for the benefit of children and young people, for example, creative arts, music and sports. Independent living skills are also promoted well, so that when young people leave the home, they do it with the best chance of making a success of their transition. No young people have left the home since the last inspection, and there has been only one admission, which was planned and appropriate. There is good and effective partnership working at all levels. Social workers comment that staff are 'very open' with them and that they also encourage young people to have a positive relationship with their social worker. The police community support officer is a regular visitor to the home and is used well to promote a positive view of the police as well as prevent criminalisation through restorative justice and behaviour contracts. He commented that there was 'very	

appropriate contact' with the service. Parents also speak highly of the home. One parent said: 'Staff are brilliant. I could not ask for anything better. They communicate very well.' Family and friends are valued, and positive relationships are promoted wherever possible. On the day of this inspection, the manager and staff were organising a Christmas buffet for family and friends and expected 40 people to attend. Staff were facilitating attendance by offering transport to parents where this was needed. Children, young people and staff had worked together to decorate the home in a very festive and welcoming fashion, using decorations which the children and young people had made with staff, such as a gingerbread village, personalised Santa pictures, snowflakes and an impressive Christmas tree. This demonstrates the value placed on, and the importance of, this celebration, as well as the positive relationships between staff, children and young people.

The manager and staff have worked well in partnership with education providers to improve educational attendance. All the children and young people have educational provision, and those who have left school have either college places or employment in the offing. One child, whose attendance at school had been very poor, is now attending on a more regular basis, as a result of good partnership working with the virtual school head. There has been a creative approach to engaging the child, and this is working successfully. Another young person has significantly improved her school attendance as she has been listened to, involved in her own education meetings, and understands the targets she needs to achieve to bring about the change she would like to happen.

Some young people bring their challenges. However, these have generally been responded to well through positive and proactive approaches to behaviour management and the implementation of clear, thorough behaviour management plans. Incentives are also used to good effect. There has been only one incident of physical intervention since the last inspection, thereby demonstrating the success of this approach. There has been one significant incident that required referral to the designated officer. Appropriate actions were taken promptly to provide the necessary safeguards.

Two requirements and three recommendations were set at the last inspection. These have been successfully addressed, and as a result, children's and young people's experiences, well-being and safety are improved. Children's files are now maintained with up-to-date information so staff have a better understanding of how to meet their current assessed needs. Staffing levels have been increased, which has enhanced the experiences of children and young people as more staff are available to enable them to pursue their interests as well as keep them safe. The workforce plan now gives a more accurate reflection of the home's approach to the training and qualifications of staff. Staff have updated their first aid training, thereby enhancing their competence to deal with medical emergencies. There is better monitoring of return home interviews when young people have been missing or had unauthorised absences, and these are now offered more consistently.

Information about this children's home

This local authority children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation for six children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. One of the places is in a self-contained house, situated adjacent to the main building.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2016	Full	Good
14/12/2015	Interim	Not judged
30/09/2015	Interim	Not judged
20/02/2015	Interim	Not judged

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016