

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	15/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC036584
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Walsall Children's Services, Civic Centre, WALSALL, West Midlands, WS1 1DB

Responsible individual	Alison Cooper
Registered manager	Jason Grainger
Inspector	Jo Stephenson

Inspection date	15/09/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC036584

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people are safe in the home because risk assessments promote their welfare. These documents are detailed and consistently applied. This means that young people's risk taking behaviours continue to reduce.
- Staff work in effective partnership with the placing authority, the virtual school, health services and other agencies. This supports young people's development and means they receive comprehensive and integrated care.
- Young people grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. They regularly participate in activities that develop their hobbies, interests and interpersonal skills. This supports their emotional resilience.
- Young people received personalised care that supports their transition to adulthood. Individualised pathway plans encourage young people to develop necessary independent living skills before they leave the home.
- Staff work with the placing authority to develop strong and effective internal support plans that advance the aims of the placement. However, these plans do not include detail young people's views, wishes or opinions.
- Some areas for development have been identified. These include ensuring that staff record their conversations with young people regarding bullying. In addition, monitoring systems do not identify patterns and trends that may impact on the on-going development of the service.

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
7. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard In order to meet the children's views, wishes and feelings standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(a) (ii) help each child to express views, wishes and feelings; (iv) regularly consult children, and seek their feedback, about the quality of the home's care.	26/10/2015
11. The positive relationships standard In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure that staff— (2)(a) (iii) encourage each child to take responsibility for the child's behaviour, in accordance with the child's age and understanding; (xii) understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable.	26/10/2015
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must— (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements to the quality of care provided in the home.	26/10/2015

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that young people are encouraged to add their views and comments to the record of restraint. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 49, paragraph 9.60)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The home is owned and operated by a local authority.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
29/08/2014	Full	Good
18/03/2014	Interim	Good progress
29/08/2013	Full	Adequate

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	good
Young people make good progress in the home. This is reinforced by the supportive relationships they have with staff. One young person said: 'I really really like the staff and they don't stop liking me when I get into trouble. I know they care about me.' Although some young people say they are 'frustrated' by staff at times, they recognise the positive impact that staff support has on their development. One young person said: 'I do understand what the staff have done for me and I can see the difference it's made.' Personalised internal care plans identify and take account of young people's challenging behaviours, presenting risks, health needs, and educational abilities. Senior care staff and managers regularly review these, so they reflect the aims and objectives of the placing authority and mirror statutory care plans provided by allocated social workers. This collaborative approach does not include consultation with young people. Their views and comments regarding the content of their internal plans or the quality of care they receive are not intrinsic to the review of these documents. This compromises the validity of these records because they do not confirm young people's wishes and feelings or demonstrate their involvement in care planning processes. Partnership working with education providers and the virtual school means that young people make progress in education. They receive practical support to promote their regular attendance and staff assist them with homework and extra study. Staff advocate for them to be provided with suitable education placements that reflect their learning styles and preferences. This encourages young people to re-engage in formal and structured education. One young person said: 'I have homework every night now and the staff help me with it, but sometimes I'm better at it then they are, so I help them.' Staff ensure that young people attend regular health appointments, including sessions with mental health professionals and other specialist agencies. The home operates a model of care based on Transactional Analysis, and staff have completed foundation training in this area. This supports young people's daily experience and emotional health because staff continually consider and promote their self-esteem and confidence. Young people's transition from the home, to more independent accommodation, is well planned and managed. Staff support young people to develop the practical, emotional and social skills necessary for independence. They work in partnership	

with the placing authority and other agencies, advocating for young people. This ensures that plans for young people are realistic and completed over a suitable timescale.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
Young people are safe because staff are competent in identifying and managing the risks that they present. One young person said, 'Staff want me to be safe and that's a nice feeling.' Staff devise risk assessments and behaviour plans in partnership with other agencies and allocated social workers. They encourage young people to take proportionate risks that reflect their age, understanding and social skills. Young people grow in confidence and self-esteem because they begin to learn to take responsibility for their own safety. Positive behaviour is promoted and encouraged. For some young people this includes the use of personalised incentive programmes. Staff reward their achievements, and track and celebrate their progress. Boundaries in the home are clear and staff apply them consistently. Young people fully understand the behaviours that are expected of them. One young person said: 'I know how I should behave but I get angry at times. I can't help it but staff talk to me and help me calm down.' There have been some incidents of bullying in the home. On these occasions staff have not clearly communicated to young people that this behaviour is unacceptable. One-to-one sessions with young people do not encourage them to take personal responsibility for their actions, or consider the negative impact this behaviour has on others. This lack of accountability potentially hinders their social and emotional development. The use of sanctions is rare. Physical restraint is only used as a last resort to prevent immediate harm. Records of restraint are detailed and demonstrate the use of de-escalation and distraction techniques, but do not consistently include young people's comments or views. This compromises the registered manager's ability to review effectively the appropriate use of this measure of control. Staff receive regular training in safeguarding and child protection. This includes child exploitation and managing occasions when young people go missing from home. Policies and procedures relating to these areas of practice are up to date and reflect partnership working arrangements with other agencies, such as the police. This consistent and integrated approach to addressing this behaviour has resulted in a significant reduction in incidents of young people going missing from the home. Consequently, their welfare and safety is improved.	

Young people understand how to make a complaint and say they are confident that staff will address any issues they raise. An independent advocate regularly visits the home and provides young people with an alternative route to raise any concerns they may have. There have been no complaints from young people since the last inspection.

Location risk assessments are detailed and comprehensive. Fire safety checks and general health and safety checks are regularly completed along with maintenance checks. The home has been recently redecorated in parts and young people say the home is 'cosy and comfy'. This means that young people reside in a safe, welcoming, and homely environment.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
The registered manager holds a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare qualification. He has the skills and experience necessary for this role and has been registered with Ofsted since August 2013, moving permanently into this role in June 2014. The registered manager has an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's individual needs. Commitment to meeting these needs is central to the practice of the home. This ethos ensures that young people make continual progress. The registered manager tracks this through the assessment and evaluation of their internal care plans and risk assessments. He reviews young people's progress against the aims and objectives of the placing authority care plan. Young people have a clear précis of their placement journey because this review process is consistently applied. Staff receive regular formal supervision and the training plan for the home is regularly reviewed. Staff are able to access courses that reflect young people's individual needs. As a result, they have the skills and knowledge they need to support young people and help them to move forward with their lives. Internal monitoring systems and regular visits by an independent person support appraise the quality of care provided by the home. This allows the registered manager to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the service and take action to address any shortfalls. Nevertheless, monitoring practices do not identify patterns and trends in young people's behaviour. For example, systems only track the frequency of incidents. They do not establish any common factors that may act as antecedents to these incidents. Significant information relating to any possible underlying explanations for these behaviours is absent. This reduces the effectiveness of monitoring systems in continually driving forward improvements in	

the quality of care.

The statement of purpose defines the central function of the home and details the overall objectives of the service. These aims are achieved because the registered manager works in effective partnership with a range of external services. These include the virtual school, specialist support agencies, independent reviewing officers and allocated social workers. This multi-agency approach to identifying and meeting young people's needs is a considerable strength of the home. These strong relationships promote open and honest communication between the service and other professionals. This allows the registered manager to appropriately challenge the practice shortfalls of other agencies when necessary.

Professionals praise the, 'perseverance, dedication and determination' of the registered manager. Social workers say that the registered manager, 'always goes the extra mile for the young people'. One professional said: 'The manager holds other agencies accountable when this is in the children's best interests. He advocates for them and becomes their voice. This is the care they deserve.'

What the inspection judgements mean

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

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

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

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

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

Information about this inspection

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

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

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