

SC036584

Registered provider: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home provides care and accommodation for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A local authority owns and operates this home.

Inspection dates: 18 to 19 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people are safe in the home because managers and staff make sure that risk assessments reflect young people's individual needs and circumstances.
- Internal care planning processes are thorough and consistently include young people's views, wishes, thoughts and feelings.
- Staff receive good quality, regular and practice-related formal supervision.

- Training courses for staff reflect young people's individual needs. As a result, staff are well equipped to meet young people's needs effectively.
- The registered manager works in partnership with other agencies and professionals. This promotes young people's safety and welfare.
- Staff work with external agencies to prioritise young people's education and challenge any barriers to education that young people face.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Staff do not always complete one-to-one key-work sessions with young people to support specific risk-reduction strategies.
- Records do not always contain sufficient detail about the events leading up to an incident of physical restraint.
- The content of the quality of care review report does not reflect the registered manager's professional judgement about the strengths and needs of the service.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/10/2016	Full	Good
23/02/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/09/2015	Full	Good

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet 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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i))	12/03/2018
The registered person must ensure that within 24 hours of the use of a measure of control, discipline or restraint in relation to a child in the home, a record is made which includes all necessary information. (Regulation 35(3)(a)(i–viii))	12/03/2018

Recommendations

- The registered person is responsible for deciding what each review should focus on, based on the specific circumstances of the home at that particular time and any areas of high risk to the children that the home is designed to care for, such as missing or exploitation. They will also consider what information or data recorded in the home will form part of the evidence base for their analysis and conclusions. There is no expectation that the registered person will review the home against every part of the Quality Standards every six months – registered persons should use their professional judgement to decide which factors to focus on. The review should enable the registered person to identify areas of strength and possible weakness in the home's care, which will be captured in the written report. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.4)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress as a result of living in this home, and their day-to-day experiences are positive. This is because staff make sure that young people's care

consistently reflects their personal circumstances, individual needs and vulnerabilities. Staff are fully aware of young people's backgrounds and previous experiences. They appreciate and understand how these influence their development and progress. This knowledge enables staff to devise relevant individual care plans that shape and support young people's personal growth. Staff work with the placing authority to revise and update statutory care plans. Case files include all necessary information relating to young people and their progress to date. This partnership working means that young people benefit from comprehensive and well-planned care and support.

Relationships between young people and staff are extremely positive. Young people say that they know that staff care about them because 'they tell us all the time'. One young person said, 'I can talk to the staff and they listen to me. They make me feel special.' Staff use these good relationships with young people to support young people's development and growth. For example, young people and staff have meaningful discussions about a range of topics including, education, health, well-being, feelings and emotions, and future plans.

Staff take time to explain to young people the content of their care plans. Staff help young people to express their views and wishes, as well as their opinions about the quality of care provided by the service. This continual consultation means that young people's comments are intrinsic to decisions about their care.

Staff encourage young people to look after their physical and emotional health. They support young people to stay active, eat a balanced diet and make good lifestyle choices. When young people have specific health needs such as mental health concerns, staff work in partnership with specialist agencies. When appropriate, and to support their development and progress, young people can access bespoke psychotherapy services. These assist young people to express their emotions and manage their anxieties.

Supporting young people's education is a priority for staff. Most young people have suitable school or college placements and make excellent progress. Some young people are at a stage in their lives when they are unsure which career path to follow and, as a result, refuse to engage in post-16 learning. Staff work in partnership with the placing authority, local colleges and specialist learning provisions to provide young people with a varied range of learning and training opportunities to re-ignite their interest. This approach helps young people to recognise how important education is to their development.

Staff help young people to maintain regular contact with their families, when this is safe and appropriate. They make sure that they follow agreed contact arrangements and provide young people with both practical and emotional support. Young people are involved in local community groups, such as youth clubs, and make the most of local leisure facilities. This provides young people with the opportunity to expand their social circles and develop new friendships. This promotes young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Some young people currently living in the home are preparing to move towards independence and adulthood. Staff devise independent living skills programmes to assess young people's skills and abilities, and to identify areas where they may need longer-term help and support. These programmes take account of both the practical and emotional skills young people need to live independently. Subsequently, staff work with young people and with the placing authority to identify suitable and sustainable future accommodation options.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people are safe and say that they feel safe. They do not identify bullying to be an issue. One young person said, 'We argue but bullying doesn't happen. It's not allowed and we wouldn't anyway and staff would stop it.' Young people spoke enthusiastically about the anti-bullying workshops that they do with staff. Staff proudly showcase young people's anti-bullying posters and statements around the home.

Staff work with young people, the placing authority and other agencies to identify possible risks that may place young people at risk of harm. Risk assessments detail risk reduction and management strategies that help to keep young people safe. These also support them to take age-appropriate responsibility for their own risks as they move towards adulthood. Nevertheless, for some young people, staff do not ensure that they consistently implement these strategies. For example, when risk assessments indicate that staff will complete bespoke one-to-one sessions with young people to discuss risks, they do not always deliver these sessions. This shortfall reduces the effectiveness of these risk assessments.

Incidents of young people going missing from the home are extremely rare. There has been one occasion since the last full inspection in October 2016. Staff continue to prioritise this aspect of young people's safety and welfare. They work in partnership with young people's families, the placing authority and local police teams. Together they identify any underlying issues that may cause young people to go missing from the home, including any risk of sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff continually review and update potential risks. These reflect changes to young people's circumstances and a proportionate approach to managing identified risks.

Staff complete training in the use of physical restraint and de-escalation techniques. The use of this measure of control is rare and only used to prevent young people from hurting themselves and/or others. Some physical restraint records lack necessary details. For example, staff do not always fully record the events leading up to a physical restraint or the de-escalation techniques they use to try to prevent the need for restraint. Furthermore, staff often use general statements such as 'unacceptable behaviour' in both physical restraint and sanction records. This shortfall limits the registered manager's ability to fully assess the appropriate use of these measures of control.

Staff regularly refresh their safeguarding training. This training includes elements on bullying, child protection, safeguarding legislation and the management of allegations. Staff have a good understanding of risk factors that potentially compromise young

people's safety. This knowledge means that staff are able to keep young people safe from harm and promote their welfare.

Young people live in a safe and well-maintained home. Staff complete regular health and safety, and fire checks. When young people are reluctant to participate in fire drills, staff deliver bespoke one-to-one sessions. These help young people to understand the importance of fire safety and their own responsibilities in the event of such an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has substantial experience of managing residential services for young people. He holds relevant qualifications for this role, including the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare.

Young people make good progress in the home because the registered manager makes sure that meeting their needs is a priority for the service. He has a good understanding of young people's backgrounds and specific circumstances, and works in partnership with other agencies and professionals. One social worker said, 'Managers and staff put young people first from day one.' Another said, 'The manager runs a tight ship and brings everyone together. I think that's why young people do so well.' The registered manager confidently challenges others when they fail to provide young people with good care or support. As a result, young people's welfare and well-being is promoted.

Staff are motivated and enthusiastic in their role. They focus their daily tasks and activities on supporting young people and meeting their needs. All eligible care staff are suitably qualified or working towards attaining relevant qualification within an acceptable timescale. The registered manager makes sure that all staff receive regular practice-related formal supervision. These sessions encourage staff to reflect on and review their own practice, and consider how this may impact on young people's progress. Furthermore, internal training programmes and workshop-learning sessions reflect young people's individual needs. Subsequently, staff have the skills they need to support young people effectively.

The registered manager uses his knowledge of the service and of each young person to review the development of the home. Young people's views and opinions about the care that they receive are central to this process. The registered manager implements various monitoring tools to assess the service and evaluate the impact on young people's development. He considers young people's relationships with staff and with each other, and reflects on how these may influence their individual progress. This approach means that the registered manager is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the service. However, generic quality of care review templates do not enable the registered manager to fully reflect on the specific attributes, characteristics or features of this home. This is a missed opportunity for the registered manager to scrutinise the service using his professional judgement.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and 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 whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, 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'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC036584

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, Civic Centre,
Darwall Street, Walsall WS1 1TP

Responsible individual: Angela Edwards

Registered manager: Jason Grainger

Inspector

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector

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