

Children's homes – interim inspection

Inspection date	29/02/2016
Unique reference number	SC036917
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Registered person address	Children's Services, The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, London SE18 6HQ

Responsible individual	Andrew O'Sullivan
Registered manager	Deborah Forde
Inspector	Angus Mackay

Inspection date	29/02/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Outstanding
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 outstanding at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has sustained effectiveness. Young people feel safe in this home and make good progress. Managers have not fully met all the recommendations set at the last inspection. However, young people continue to thrive in the home and achieve good outcomes. In particular, young people have gained confidence, improved empathy for others, reduced absences from the home, improved self-help skills and improved school attendance. A social worker commented, 'The young person has embraced the ethos here. She feels supported by staff, they take time to understand her needs and help her to achieve positive outcomes.' A young person said, 'I just love waking up here every day. I feel loved and wanted by everyone here.' Young people are aware of the care plans and risk assessments, as they discuss them with their keyworkers and at reviews. A social worker and independent reviewing officer confirmed that young people take an active part in reviews, ably supported by the home. The management team reviews all plans weekly through team meetings, and records detailed feedback on weekly review sheets. They incorporate this feedback into monthly summaries of progress on each young person. However, keyworkers have not accurately recorded all planned actions for identified risks or the targets on the original risk assessments or placement plans. The excellent monthly summaries minimise the impact of this on the tracking of young people's progress All young people receive encouragement and support to attend education and to achieve their full potential there. The staff at the home work closely with other professionals, including schools, virtual school and social workers to provide the appropriate education for each individual. Where young people experience difficulties engaging in education, the staff display patience and creativity to aid them in maintaining placements or to explore more suitable courses. Most young people have excellent attendance and good predicted grades in school or college. Young people enjoy excellent relationships with the staff. They are proud of their home, which has a warm, welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Their bedrooms are	

highly personalised and beautifully decorated and maintained. One young person said of the home, 'I have always felt out of place but I feel really at home here and feel I should always have been here. I get on with the staff. They are very loving, welcoming, kind and open-minded. There is a loving atmosphere about here. Staff are always happy, you can tell that they enjoy their job and do not see us as a burden. I definitely agree with the last inspection report, this is an outstanding home.'

The home has a stable staff team supported by an experienced and long-serving management team. The registered manager is highly thought of by other professionals, staff and young people. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The manager sets the positive tone in the home, interacting calmly with staff, young people and visitors. She has created a nurturing environment here.' A social worker supported this, saying, 'It does not feel like a children's home. From when you first enter it is like a real home and that is down to the manager.'

The registered manager makes good use of the very detailed, well-structured and comprehensive independent person's reports. These reports provide a good insight into the conduct of the home and how staff ensure that they appropriately safeguard young people. The reports benefit from detailed recording of interviews with young people, social workers and family members. The reports are appropriately challenging and set targets for the home to improve the care provided. However, the targets do not have suggested timescales for completion. In addition, the reports go to the local authority, prior to being sent to HMCI, which potentially compromises their independence and validity as a safeguard for young people.

The manager completes her own review of the home, evidencing how staff are meeting the Quality Standards. The reports evidence a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the home and set clear targets for improvement. The management team uses team meetings and supervision to share key messages from their monitoring to improve outcomes for young people. In the current reports the registered manager includes more detailed figures to evidence positive outcomes for young people in areas such as school attendance, school attainment, reductions in missing from care and other measurable targets. The home is effectively managed to provide the aims and objectives detailed in the statement of purpose, in particular, to improve outcomes for young people. One young person said, 'The manager makes this place special. She is the glue that holds it all together.'

Staff numbers are suitable to meet the needs of the children and to deliver the service described in the statement of purpose. Where the manager uses agency staff, they are included in staff training and supervision. The home continues to address the training needs of agency staff with their employers. However, not all agencies have ensured that their staff have a suitable level 3 qualification. The

home has recently recruited new staff and a social worker commented, 'They have recruited the right people. They have brought in people who ensure that the place feels the same and looks the same. They have excellent retention and have managed to maintain the ethos of the home.' The manager enhances the safe recruitment of staff by the full inclusion of the leavers' group of ex-residents in recruitment panels. Decisions are jointly arrived at, making full use of the young people's insight and experience.

The manager has an excellent training programme in place, which fully prepares staff for working with the young people accommodated. All components of the workforce plan are in place, but the manager has not yet completed the document. However, staff induction and performance management continue to be effective. All staff receive regular reflective supervision, supported by annual appraisals. The manager has not yet included the views of other professionals or the young people on staff when conducting annual appraisals.

Young people have a real impact on the development of the home, and the manager includes them in a range of personally challenging and developmental activities in the community. Within the home, staff gather young people's views through their meetings, keyworker sessions and monthly feedback forms. The local authority is also trialling application software for use on mobile telephones as an additional means of young people communicating ideas or concerns. The internal methods of communication are highly effective, providing young people with immediate formal feedback. The home continues to consult with current and past residents to improve policies, procedures and guidance in the home. The manager is encouraging young people to broaden their positive contribution outside the safe home environment. One young person has applied to be on the children's council and another to attend the local safer neighbourhood committee. Young people gain confidence and develop a better understanding of citizenship and belonging through these activities. A young person said, 'I am really looking forward to taking on this trust. I am looking forward to making a contribution back to others.'

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides care and accommodation for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural problems. The home undertakes outreach work with young people, either to prevent the need for accommodation, or to provide ongoing support to them and their carers.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/09/2015	Full	Outstanding
12/02/2015	Interim	Improved Effectiveness
04/06/2014	Full	Good
05/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress

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 within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
Ensure that where the independent person's report recommends actions that the registered person may take in relation to the home, that these include timescales within which the registered person must consider whether or not to take these actions. The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to HMCI (Regulation 44 (5)(7)(a)).	29/04/2016

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that young people's records are kept up to date and provide an accurate description of the work done with them. In particular ensure that risk assessments, care plans and healthcare plans have clear targets with identified areas of responsibility and timelines (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3).
- Complete the workforce development plan, which can fulfil the workforce related requirements of regulation 16 schedule 1 (paragraphs 19 and 20) (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 53, paragraph 10.8).
- Take into account the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff, and the views of children in the home when conducting staff appraisals (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61, paragraph 13.5).

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*.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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