

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	29/09/2015
Unique reference number	SC036917
Type of inspection	Full
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	29/09/2015
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	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceeds the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC036917

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- It has an inspirational manager who has empowered staff and young people to effect change in the home.
- The manager has developed excellent, positive and creative relationships with the virtual school, social workers and the local safeguarding team. These relationships result in well-organised and creative training programmes for staff and improved outcomes for young people.
- Young people in the home and those who used to live there have a monumental effect on the development of staff understanding of their experience. In particular they have had a significant impact on staff understanding of how to meet their cultural, religious and linguistic needs.
- The home has developed a highly effective outreach service which helps in maintaining young people at the home as well as supporting others when moving on to independent settings.
- Young people thrive in the setting and develop strong attachments and positive relationships. One said, 'The staff here are fantastic. I love it here. It is amazing here and so much better than anywhere else I have been. I love meeting these lovely people and being proud to call them my family.'

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

Recommendations

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

- Ensure that any external agency staff meet the requirements in regulation 32(4) regarding mandatory qualifications. In particular ensure that they have a level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare or an equivalent qualification, by the relevant date. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 54, paragraph 10.16)
- Where staff are continually and actively assessing the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them, ensure records clearly record progress or actions. In particular that their missing person's record, placement plan and risk assessments are effectively maintained. (The Guide to The Quality Standards, page 42, paragraph 9.5)
- Record the administration of controlled drugs in a bound book with numbered pages. (The Royal Pharmaceutical Society, guide to the handling of medicines in social care, page 19, paragraph 1)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides short and medium-term residential care for up to five young people with emotional and/or behavioural problems. The home also undertakes outreach work with young people, either to prevent the need for accommodation, or to support them and their carers once they have left the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
04/06/2014	Full	Good
05/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
09/10/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The overall experiences and progress of young people are outstanding because they make significant progress in the home. Young people develop emotionally and educationally. They develop appropriate life skills to prepare them for the next stage in their lives. The staff are exceptional at managing young people's moves into the home and in preparing them for leaving. They can also provide essential additional support, for social workers, families, carers, schools and most importantly, young people, as an outreach service when they move on or to help them remain at home. Innovations include family work and coffee mornings to encourage potential specialist foster carers. These initiatives are highly valued by the local authority and have provided invaluable additional resources, aiding long-term success for young people. One person moving on from the home said, 'Staff really work hard and do a lot for the young people. They are a brilliant, brilliant team with a vast knowledge of what is available. It works really well as they come together as a really cohesive team. When you put them all together it is amazing the breadth of what they know.' The manager has been very creative in getting young people involved in change and improvement in the home. One young person said, 'I get listened to here and staff respond positively to me.' Successful innovations include monthly feedback forms from the young people and the creation of a leavers group, consisting of previous residents, who play an active role in the home. The group provides mentoring with education, assists in recruitment and recently helped the manager to rewrite the young people's guide. They assist in helping staff to understand what it is like to be looked after and how to improve outcomes for them. One member of the group said of his role, 'The group is extremely effective and beneficial because of our experience of being there. We are now working on the quality standards and how to improve the impact of staff on the care of young people.' The home have an excellent relationship with the virtual school head and with education providers. Where young people have experienced difficulties, the home and virtual school have been highly creative and innovative in their approach. The virtual school head said, 'They advocate for the child in a professional supportive way. They are really carers.' The staff have all taken part in training to understand	

the importance of education and how to understand personal education plans. Staff support all aspects of the young people's learning including ensuring they are appropriately dressed, supporting them in doing homework and attending all meetings. One young person said, 'School is very stressful with exams and staff help me a lot. They were very supportive getting me to go to bed early, do homework and even eat fish to improve my brain power.' Young people are making excellent progress in accessing and sustaining school and college courses with this support. This has resulted in improved attendance, (in some cases perfect attendance), sitting examinations early and successfully and young people expressing enthusiasm for their courses.

Young people have excellent relationships with staff. They trust staff and readily confide in them. One young person said, 'The way they care for children is the best thing about here. They do not chat about you when they leave. They are good with confidentiality. They are really good at making you feel not embarrassed about sensitive personal issues.'

Staff are knowledgeable about the young people and their care, education and health plans. Plans are thorough, up to date and regularly monitored in staff supervision. Managers are planning to introduce new placement plans and risk assessments which more clearly evidence young people's progress. Young people engage positively in keyworker sessions and make contributions to these plans. They confidently address issues ranging from sexual identity to how to remain safe in the community. Young people are developing an awareness of how to manage risks, are forming positive attachments and gaining confidence in their personal identity through this work. One says, 'It is good here, I love it. It builds your confidence and there is good banter.'

Young people love their home, in particular their bedrooms. They have keys to their own rooms and enjoy the privacy staff afford them there. Young people's rooms vividly reflect their individual personalities. A social worker said, 'She personalised her room put up family pictures and made it her own. It is so touching to see her room.' Young people see this as home and gain stability from their investment in it. When asked what she would change, one young person said, 'I wouldn't change anything because if I did it would not be home.'

Young people are aware of how to stay healthy and say keyworkers talk to them about healthy eating and the benefits of exercise but also issues of sexual health. Where any young person is in need of specialist help, the home ensures that they receive it. Staff are very vocal advocates for young people in gaining appropriate support from children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and have recently successfully challenged to obtain an improved service for individuals.

Young people who have previously struggled to form attachments and friendships have made astonishing improvements with the support of staff. They are

encouraged to bring friends back and staff regularly review risk assessments to enable them to share positive relationships in the community. Staff have successfully addressed family contacts and young people are gradually reforming previously disrupted relationships with family and carers. An independent reviewing officer and a social worker jointly commented, 'We have known the young person for several years. In here staff have provided her with that nurturing and quality of care and space she needed. This has allowed her to grow and develop positive peer and family relationships. She is the happiest we have ever seen her.'

Young people partake in a wide range of activities designed to help their social skills, health and educational development and to have fun. They are making progress in all areas of development with this assistance. Where individuals have identified additional activities they wish to do, the staff strive to put these in place. One young person said, 'Before coming here I had literally been nowhere. They have taken me on three holidays which were great and loads of other exciting things.' These activities are building young people's confidence, relationships with others and confidence in social situations.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected is outstanding because young people feel exceptionally safe in the home and say staff are amazing. Staff ensure that they clearly identify all risks for each young person and meticulously maintain detailed risk assessments. Young people say that staff discuss these with them and are constantly checking on their safety, including when using the internet. Young people are comfortable about 'opening up' to staff about their issues, with one saying, 'I get on well with the staff I can see any of them or talk to any of them, I feel one hundred per cent comfortable with the staff and I can confide in any of them.' Keyworkers and managers regularly review risk assessments in supervision and update them where young people have achieved their targets. Monthly summaries and reviews capture this information. The manager is in the process of reviewing the recording system to allow easier tracking of progress or regression. Where young people go missing, staff follow appropriate procedures and subsequently to endeavour to keep them safe. The local authority ensure that social workers conduct return interviews and an independent person is available	

where young people would prefer this. The missing person's logbook does not always record when these interviews have taken place, although staff note this in young people's files. Staff analysis of reasons for young people going missing and excellent key working has aided young people in settling in the home. Most young people settle in the home and there are few occasions when they go missing. One young person says, 'I do not go missing because I have no reason to. I have a warm bed, food and people that love me.' Where young people have gone missing, and put themselves at risk, the staff have worked extremely closely with the safeguarding team and the police to plan effectively for their future care.

There are few restraints as staff use other interventions successfully to defuse situations. Effective risk assessments and guidance in behavioural support plans enable staff to successfully manage situations in a safe and positive manner. Staff encourage change in young people by rewarding targeted, desired behaviours. Staff structure interventions with young people carefully, using a positive social learning theory approach. They use this to encourage young people to focus on the positives from any situation. One young person praised the impact this has had on her, 'They have helped me a lot with boundaries. At home I had no boundaries and I was out of control, I did what I wanted. This has given me loads of stability.'

Medicines are safely stored and recorded. As a safety measure the medical cabinet has a padlock on it. During the inspection the home put in place a separate lockable box in the cabinet for storing controlled drugs. Staff accurately record controlled drugs, their receipt and disposal, in a separate logbook. The issuing of controlled drugs is accurate but staff do not record in a bound logbook with numbered pages.

All staff are recruited using safer recruitment guidelines. The involvement of the leaver's group in selection panels enhances the recruitment of suitable staff. The local safeguarding team confirm that the home rigorously applies safer recruitment practices in the selection of all staff. Managers ensure that they rigorously maintain all staff files. These are clearly structured and contain records of all required checks.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
The leadership and management of the home are outstanding because the manager is inspirational to the staff team and ambitious for the young people. She has created an atmosphere and culture of celebration of the young people's	

success and their outcomes. An ex-resident presented her with a trophy on her birthday inscribed, 'This award is the "World's Best Children's Home Manager Award." You have always encouraged every young person here to "reach for the stars" so here is your very own star.'

The manager of the home has extensive experience and is suitably qualified. She has been manager of this setting for 11 years and has developed and maintained a happy, skilled and confident staff team. The senior management team is creative, energetic and stable. It includes a deputy manager who has been in the home longer than the manager and shares the same vision, drive and professionalism as her.

The manager is highly valued by staff, young people and other professionals working with the home. Young people say they love her and would not want anyone else managing the home. She has developed extremely positive and effective working relationships with the virtual school, local schools, fostering and adoption services, CAMHS and social workers. These relationships assist the young people's progression and the development of local services for looked after children. For example, work with the fostering team is aiding in the recruitment of foster families for adolescents moving on from the children's home.

The manager has an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and is constantly striving for improvement. She has recently reviewed the statement of purpose and effectively linked this to the new quality standards. Staff and young people are aware of this work and the manager has been dynamic in transmitting the changes incorporated in the new statement of purpose. During the inspection, the deputy manager rectified some slight omissions and sent a revised version to HMCI.

Recent recruitment has diminished the use of agency staff. Where agency staff are used, the manager carefully selects those who can enhance the care provided to young people. She ensures that they are used consistently, avoiding disruptions in attachments for young people. The manager has included them in some of the home's essential training such as safeguarding. Where agency staff have not yet commenced a level three qualification their agency have agreed to make this a priority.

The home does not currently have a workforce development plan as a separate document but has the components. The manager is conducting a detailed and sophisticated skills audit which is underpinning the creation of the final document. There is a comprehensive training programme which supplies staff with essential knowledge to safely care for the young people. The local authority positively supports the manager in the provision of this comprehensive training. This includes specially tailored training devised by the Registered Manager with the virtual head, and separately with the safeguarding team. The manager is adopting a structured

approach to completing the plan to incorporate core training, individual training needs from the skills audit and professional development from appraisals.

The manager maintains a local risk assessment which identifies the positive resources in the area as well as potential risks. She has worked hard at developing good relationships with neighbours which allow the young people to feel safe in the area of the home.

The manager and staff team are confident, knowledgeable and skilled in their interactions with other professional. As previously mentioned they have successfully advocated for young people with local services to get improved outcomes in education and in the provision of CAMHS resources.

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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