

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	10/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC037281
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Suffolk County Council
Registered person address	Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Russell Road, IPSWICH, IP1 2BX

Responsible individual	Clifford James
Registered manager	Serena Emberley
Inspector	Ashley Hinson

Inspection date	10/03/2016
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 Sustained effectiveness.	
The children continue to make good progress as a result of the care and support that they receive. The management team have responded to the issues identified at the last inspection. Whilst they have fully addressed some issues, others require further attention. However, these weaknesses have not impacted upon children's safety and wellbeing. The staff have worked with the children to increase their understanding of the risks posed by the internet. The children have been shown safety guides and now have to sign an internet access agreement prior to being able to use the computer. Some staff have attended e-safety training. The staff have now accessed training in relation to child sexual exploitation. The staff report the training to have been useful and informative. As a result their knowledge of the risks and indicators associated with child sexual exploitation and online safety has grown and they are better equipped to protect children. In contrast, night staff have not accessed key safeguarding training. This means there is a potential gap in knowledge for staff who work in this role. In addition, having reviewed the fire drill records the manager identified that night staff have not participated in a recent fire drill. Whilst plans are in place to address this, this means that night staff are less experienced in supporting the young people to evacuate the building. There continue to be occasions when the staff need to physically intervene to keep the children safe. The associated records have improved. They now link more clearly to incident forms where the detail of the associated debrief take place. External professionals were positive about the way in which staff manage the children's behaviour. One said: 'The staff are really good. I have seen them cope with his outbursts really well, talking and calming him.' Another spoke about the way in which the staff emphasise the strengths of the children: 'What is good is that they are focused on the positives and what is going well.' This means the children see and hear people speaking positively about them. This promotes their self-esteem and provides them with further motivation to succeed.	

The management team have updated the location risk assessment. This now offers a more thorough assessment of the risks posed by the location. The risk assessment itself has not been shared with the children and some staff are unaware of its content. As a result there is a lack of clarity regarding the content, staffs awareness of it and the staffs knowledge of children's understanding of the risks.

Two children have moved into the home. These moves have been well planned and successful. External professionals involved in this process were positive about the way in which the home managed these transitions. One said: 'They have got to know him. He has built good trusting relationships with staff.' As a result the children are stable in placement and well placed to make progress. The children spoke positively about their introduction to the home. The children are engaging well with their education. The staff promote a culture of educational attainment. This has had a demonstrable effect, with children taking pride in their appearance and wearing their school uniforms proudly. One child's school report arrived during the course of the inspection. This was glowing and reflects the impact the service has on the children. No children have left the home since the full inspection.

Regular independent monitoring visits take place. Recently the service has not submitted these to the regulator in a timely manner. Whilst the reports are detailed, they do not include feedback from families of the children placed in the home. This means that the organisation is missing out on feedback from relevant people.

The manager and deputy manager are reflective and realistic about the quality of the service, recognising that young people make progress whilst also acknowledging there are areas for improvement. The managers provide supervision, and staff report feeling supported. The manager is alert to the need to be very considered when making any future placement decisions. She sees the matching process as being crucial to the ongoing progress and long term wellbeing of the current residents.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. There has been one incident where a member of staff did not maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Whilst managers addressed this directly with the member of staff, incidents such as this should also result in a discussion with the local authorities designated officer to enable an accurate and accessible record of such incidents. In this instance the designated officer said that had the home contacted him, he would have told them to undertake their own investigation but that in the future such incidents should result in a consultation.

External professionals speak very positively about partnership working with the home. A mental health worker stated: 'My first impression was how passionate they are. They have a reputation of being keen to engage with us and to get the support.' A social worker emphasised: 'They keep me up to date. They involve me

in risk assessment updates. They help me to supervise contact.' As a result there is a joined up approach to meeting the children's needs.

The young people speak positively about the home and have a good relationship with the staff who support them. They interact with ease with the staff and staff ensure they are able to express their views about the care they receive. The reviewing officer spoke positively about the way the homes staff conduct themselves during reviews and the quality of the verbal and written contributions they make. The staff support the children to pursue their interests. This includes leisure interests and spiritual development. One child has developed an interest in Catholicism and the staff have assisted him to make links with a local church. He is now due to take his first holy communion, with the whole resident group joining him for a party afterwards.

Information about this children's home

Owned and operated by a local authority, this home provides medium and long-term placements for up to seven children who have emotional and or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/09/2015	Full	Good
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/09/2014	Full	Good
12/03/2014	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 with the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
12: The protection of children standard In order to meet the protection of children standard with particular regard to night staff accessing an appropriate range of safeguarding training the registered provider must ensure staff: (2) (a) (iii) have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a child is at risk of harm.	30/04/2016
The registered person must ensure that when the independent person is carrying out a visit, the independent person interviews in private parents and relatives of young people resident in the home. (Regulation 44 (2) (a))	30/04/2016

Recommendations

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

Ensure that where the home identifies concerns about a staff members conduct in relation to young people, manager discuss this with the designated officer. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 44 paragraph 9.18)

Ensure that the children and staff understand the content of the location risk assessment and the identified risks. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 64 paragraph 15.1)

Consider introducing a system to evidence that staff are aware of the content of risk assessments, understand them and agree with them. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 42 paragraph 9.5)

Ensure that night staff are able to experience a fire drill and have had their

competency to react to a night time alarm recently assessed. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 61 paragraph 13.1)

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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