

Children's homes – Interim inspection

Inspection date	15/02/2017
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	Deirdra Keating

Inspection date	15/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Requires improvement
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 as requires improvement at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved in effectiveness. At the full inspection in September 2016, 12 regulatory shortfalls were raised. The manager has worked hard to address these shortfalls. Ten out of the 12 requirements are met, there is progress towards one of the requirements but it is not yet complete and one is not addressed. This does not have an impact on the quality of the children's care. A shortfall was raised at the last inspection because the record of physical intervention did not properly reflect the child's views or provide details about an alleged injury. A sample of four intervention records during this inspection shows that there are detailed and robust debriefings with the children. The records show significant input from the child and include their feelings, reflections and illustrations. There has been one complaint raised by a child following a physical intervention. This has been fully investigated and resolved. The investigation included the child's social worker and the designated officer from the local authority. There has been a renewed emphasis on better record keeping. Staff are also encouraged to challenge one another's practice, providing an extra safeguard for the children. There has been one new notification to Ofsted since the last inspection and one update to an existing notification. Both of these notifications have included all of the relevant details. The manager has reflected on a previous shortfall and taken action to ensure that the staff have enough time to provide a detailed summary of the incident. Following a child protection investigation, the manager has sourced a preventative course, called 'Boys to Men', for all of the children. This was delivered in the home by local community police support officers. This taught the children about their personal safety, e-safety and safe relationships. The course was well attended and enjoyed by the children. The staff followed this up with group discussions and a quiz that included sharing the details of the location risk assessment. This demonstrates responsive work to teach the children about safe behaviours and appropriate boundaries. There has been one complaint. A clear chronology and record of the complaint	

investigation, including the outcome and responses, show that this has been resolved satisfactorily.

Previously the manager had not ratified the fire risk assessment, after it was identified as being out of date. The home's property advisor has now signed off the risk assessment as a satisfactory assessment of associated fire risks. This ensures that current risks are identified and strategies are in place to mitigate the risks.

A sample of three staff recruitment files shows no discrepancies or shortfalls. The human resources team requests pre-employment references, which the manager follows up. The manager pays particular attention to gaps in employment and verification of self-employment. This ensures that staff are suitable and checked thoroughly prior to employment.

The manager uses a supervision wall chart matrix to give a visual oversight of those staff who need to have supervision. However, three staff out of 25 staff have had no supervision for up to three months, which does not meet the service expectations for the provision of supervision or provide those staff with the oversight they should be able to expect.

Three care plans sampled include the up-to-date meeting minutes of the children's local authority reviews. The staff know the outcomes of the reviews and use this information to inform care planning. Children who need it access therapeutic intervention. Case records include the detail of discussions with mental health professionals, the outcome and the resulting appointments.

The administration of medication records is checked as part of the monthly management checks. The manager has not picked up that monitoring arrangements are not working consistently. There are no actual errors in the administration of medication but there are minor recording anomalies that would benefit from explanation. The introduction of management checks helps the manager to keep a check on daily routines. The deputy manager supports the manager with the monitoring of records. Monitoring systems have been implemented although some of these, such as the medication audit, are not yet embedded in practice successfully.

The manager has requested the views of parents using feedback forms. These forms have also been given to the children, who have shared their views about the home. There is a range of views in the review of care, which include those from professionals, parents and community-based workers. External monitoring is robust and pulls through actions to help the staff to improve practice. The external visitor questions incidents and actions, which provides an additional safeguard for children.

There are no missing-from-home incidents and no children are at risk of child sexual exploitation. Children are educated well about risks and the dangers of

leaving the home alone. Children use the large garden but do not go to the local park or into the community unless as a group or with the staff.

There are no incidents of bullying, although there are a number of minor disagreements and some tensions in the group. Preventative group work takes place with the children to facilitate better communication and to improve relationships. The children are receptive and work with staff to resolve their differences. The manager has built a culture in which it is commonplace to discuss feelings openly. This has equipped the children with a good level of emotional literacy which helps them to express how they feel.

There are 21 members of staff, 18 of whom are qualified to diploma level 3 in health and social care or working towards this qualification. All mandatory training is undertaken and refreshed regularly. A good deal of training has taken place in the last five months. The manager fully supports staff's access to training and staff's professional development. This ensures that staff are equipped for their roles.

The staff have recorded 26 behavioural consequences records, which they refer to as 'amends', in five months. The records show that all children have had consequences following undesirable behaviour. The consequences are meaningful and linked to the event. The records show that staff treat the children equitably and that they have considered the actual behaviour. This aids the children's reflection and learning.

This home is successful in promoting and prioritising education for children. All children attend well and, in many cases, reintegrate into mainstream school provision. The children complete their homework and enjoy the extra-curricular benefits of school. This builds healthy routines and prepares children for further education.

Children benefit hugely from established community links and extra-curricular activities, as well as community sports clubs. This encourages healthy active lifestyles and enables the children to build relationships outside the home.

Children are all highly positive about this home. They have formed strong attachments to the staff. The children enjoy the range of activities and they value living with their peer group. Each child demonstrates that they have invested in the home and has a sense of belonging in the home and in the local community. This improves their feelings of security and stability.

Children benefit from a family home environment and strong relationships with an established staff team. The children learn how to live alongside others and accept one another's differences. The staff are successful in supporting children to return to school and helping them to improve their feelings of self-worth.

Overall, the manager has responded quickly to the shortfalls raised. The staff team

has been involved in addressing the shortfalls and ensuring that action plans inform their practice. There is a shared commitment among the staff to improving the home.

Staff share a child-centred focus that has enabled the children to address historical issues successfully and to progress in all areas of their development. There has been an impact on organisational and management tasks, which have not always been given enough time. The progress made at this inspection demonstrates that the balance is being addressed.

Information about this children's home

This local authority home provides medium-term 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
14/09/2016	Full	Requires improvement
10/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/09/2015	Full	Good
04/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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
13. The leadership and management standard In order to meet the leadership and management standard, the registered provider must— (2)(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.	31/03/2017
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4) (b))	31/03/2017

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 that 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 whom 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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