

SC038435

Registered provider: Sunfield Children's Homes Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is a children's home registered with Ofsted. It is also a residential special school registered by the Department of Education. Since May 2017 it has become a subsidiary of the Ruskin Mill Trust. The home is registered to accommodate 61 children who have severe and complex learning difficulties and behavioural needs, including seven placements for children who require short breaks. There are 12 houses within the grounds of the school. At the time of this inspection, six homes were open and accommodating 19 children.

Inspection dates: 26 to 27 September 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **requires improvement to be good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of last inspection: 12 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: Inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection:

None

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home requires improvement to be good because:

- Continued safeguarding and leadership challenges mean that some young people are still not having good experiences and outcomes.
- Clear policies and procedures do not underpin the administration of medication to young people.
- Staff have not always planned young people's moves to alternative homes in a child-focused manner.
- Staff do not always act upon young people's views, or discuss with them why their wishes cannot be fulfilled. As a result, young people are not able to feel that they participate fully in decisions that affect them.
- Staff do not have a thorough understanding of current safeguarding issues.
- The quality of young people's risk assessments and behaviour management plans are variable. This can lead to inconsistencies in staff practice.
- The staff roster system fails to accurately record the members of staff working in the home at any given time. Consequently, managers are unable to have a clear understanding of who is working in the home at all times.
- Managers do not adequately supervise staff. When supervisions do take place, they are of a poor quality.

The children's home's strengths:

- Young people are making good progress at school.
- There are good links between care and education staff. This promotes young people's individual needs.
- Facilities on site enable young people to have positive contact and maintain relationships with those people who are important to them.
- External professionals and parents are complimentary about the home, and say that the management team and staff work well in partnership with them.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/06/2017	Full	Inadequate
22/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
11/05/2016	Full	Requires improvement
04/02/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

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(2)(a)(i))	31/10/2017
The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines into the home. (Regulation 23(1))	31/10/2017
The registered person must ensure that an individual who works in the home in a care role has the appropriate qualification, by the relevant date, the individual has attained the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (England) ("Level 3 Diploma"); or a qualification which the registered person considers to be equivalent to the Level 3 Diploma. (Regulation 32(4)(a)(b))	31/05/2018
The registered person must ensure that all employees receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33(4)(b))	31/10/2017
The registered person must ensure that a copy of the staff duty roster of persons working at the home and a record of the actual rosters worked are maintained in the home. (Regulation 37 Schedule 4(3))	31/10/2017

Recommendations

- Ensure that positive relationships are those which are characterised by consistency and unconditional positive regard for the child on the part of the carer; and where the carer acknowledges the importance of understanding and responding to the child's lived experience of care. Positive, stable relationships help the child to feel secure and cared about and for. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21 paragraph 4.3)
- Ensure that staff take children's views, wishes and feelings into account, balancing the wishes of the child against what they judge to be in the best interests of the

child. The reasons for reaching any decision should be carefully explained to and understood by the child or children concerned. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 22 paragraph 4.9)

- Ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a child is in any way at risk of harm. The registered person should ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed and recorded in the home's workforce plan. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 43 paragraph 9.12)
- Ensure that clear procedures exist for referring child protection concerns to the placing authority or local authority where the home is situated if appropriate. All policies should be reviewed regularly and revised where appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 44 paragraph 9.19)
- Work with placing authorities to ensure that each child's transition is planned and the registered person should help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 57 paragraph 11.9)
- All records must be kept up-to-date. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62 paragraph 14.3)
In particular to children's behaviour management plans and the home's fire records.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

There have been significant changes in the management structure and in the staff team since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of individualised care provided to young people is improving. Yet, continued safeguarding and leadership challenges mean that some young people are still not having good experiences and outcomes.

Some young people are making good progress across all aspects of their development. One social worker commented, 'As a whole, there has been a remarkable improvement in the quality of life for the child I am working with.' Young people have good school attendance and this helps them to make academic progress. There are good links between care and education staff. Senior managers have developed a new staff role to work across school and the home. This enables information sharing to take place and supports young people to meet their education targets. All young people are either meeting or excelling in their education goals.

Staff do not support all young people's health needs well. Although young people are generally in good health, recent changes to how staff administer medication to young people are not supported by clear policies and procedures. There has been an occasion

when a young person has not received their prescribed medication in line with their doctor's instructions. This is because staff allowed stock levels to run out. This could have compromised the young person's health. Senior managers have recognised these concerns and taken action. They are working with health professionals to develop processes to prevent this occurring again.

Young people are being encouraged to develop their independence skills. They go shopping with staff and help with day-to-day activities, such as doing their laundry and helping with food preparation. This helps them to develop the essential life skills that they will need as adults.

When young people move on in a planned way, staff support young people appropriately. However, when young people's placements break down staff do not always manage young people's moves to alternative homes in a child-focused manner.

Young people take part in and enjoy some activities. However, off-site activities are still not always taking place as planned. This limits young people's experiences and opportunities.

Staff help young people to express their individual views and choices. However, they do not always act upon young people's views, or discuss with them the reasons why their wishes cannot be fulfilled. As a result, young people do not participate fully in decisions that affect them.

The home environment has improved. The majority of the houses are clean and have a bright, domestic feel. Communal areas are homely and inviting. Sensory rooms are open and available for young people to use. The doors to external courtyards remain open and young people are able to move freely around their homes. Similarly, wardrobe doors and cupboards are now open for young people to access their clothes and belongings. This has had a significant impact on young people and has given them personal ownership of their own belongings and the freedom to choose.

The quality of relationships between staff, and the children and young people is improving. Some staff and young people have warm and caring relationships and enjoy positive interaction. Other young people have experienced poor positive regard and understanding from staff. As a result, young people do not yet experience consistently positive relationships. Feedback from placing social workers and families is generally positive. One parent commented, 'We now have a team around her who are positive and who will take her out into the community and do things even if she has had a restraint... We are feeling a lot more positive.'

Staff support young people to keep in touch with the people who are important to them. Staff welcome families into the home. Those who live far away are able to stay in one of the home's two self-contained family flats. The staff also run weekend events for young people's brothers and sisters to visit. This helps brothers and sisters to remain close to each other.

Managers and staff advocate well for young people and challenge others when their responses are not in the best interests of young people. Staff help young people to participate in the running of the home through the skilled use of various communication aids, including pictures and symbols. Staff support young people's differences well. They promote equality and diversity through day-to-day activities, supporting young people's development of social awareness and independence.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Although managers have been swift to take the appropriate action to safeguard young people, staff do not have a thorough understanding of current safeguarding issues. The safeguarding policy is not effective; it does not inform staff of the procedures they must follow to safeguard young people. Although staff have completed mandatory safeguarding training, they are not aware of some of the current themes and dangers that pose a risk for young people. This is particularly evident regarding the risks from social media. Consequently, staff do not fully support young people to keep safe while using the internet.

On one occasion, a young person went missing from the home. This is because staff did not provide him with the required level of supervision. There have been lessons learned from this incident and new protocols help maintain his safety and that of other young people.

The quality of young people's risk assessments remains variable. In some of the homes staff write detailed and informative risk assessments, while in others the risk assessments do not contain enough information about the control measures the staff should adopt to safeguard young people. The lack of written instruction leads to inconsistencies in practice for agency and relief staff.

Incidents of challenging behaviour and the frequency of physical interventions have significantly reduced. This is because young people are more able to regulate their behaviour, resulting in fewer incidents. Staff also feel more supported by managers and feel better equipped to deal with challenging incidents.

Managers and staff have written and implemented new behaviour management plans for all young people. Again, these vary in quality across the homes. Some plans are inaccurate, and some do not contain all necessary information staff need to care for young people. As a result, this does not sufficiently inform the staff about how to meet young people's needs.

Staff complete fire drills and safety checks on a regular basis. However, they do not always keep records up to date. Consequently, managers and staff may not be aware of fire safety issues within the homes, should they arise.

The home's recruitment and vetting process helps ensure that all new staff working in the home are suitable to work with young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The home has undergone significant management and staff restructuring since the last inspection. The home has recently employed a new manager who is in the process of applying for her registration with Ofsted. The statement of purpose has been updated to reflect the changes in management.

The new senior management team has brought about a number of improvements. It has overviewed and streamlined documentation. Managers have also reviewed the appropriateness of all the young people's placements to ensure that they can meet young people's needs. Where they feel they are unable meet young people's needs, they have given notice on placements.

New care staff bring fresh ideas. This is enabling a culture change within the home. For example, doors are not routinely locked to limit young people's access to kitchens as a way of managing their behaviour. One parent stated, 'Things have improved. The staff have gone through a period of understanding as to why they do an approach.'

The home is not yet fully staffed. In an attempt to provide young people with continuity of care, core staff have worked overtime. Regular agency staff are booked. This ensures that familiar and consistent staff care for young people.

Managers do not ensure that staff rosters are up to date. They fail to record accurately the members of staff working in the home at any given time. As a result, managers are unable to have a clear understanding of who is working in the home at all times.

The management team has developed monitoring systems to ensure that the team is aware of the strengths and needs of the home. Although this has brought about improvements in some areas, these systems are not yet embedded in practice.

Staff do not receive regular supervision with their line manager. Furthermore, when supervisions do take place they are of a poor quality. A lack of regular and reflective supervision does not enable staff to improve their practice.

Although staff are still not compliant with the need to have achieved their level 3 qualification in residential childcare, this is an improving picture. Significant attempts have been made to ensure that staff have completed core-training requirements. However, shortfalls still exist in the administration of medication training. Senior managements have recognised this shortfall and have arranged for this training to take place soon.

External professionals and parents are complimentary about the home, and say that the management team and staff work in partnership with them. For example, a social worker said that she is always updated about events in a timely manner. One parent commented, 'The staff on the front line are exceptional.' Another parent stated, 'We are feeling a lot more positive... The staff seem so positive. There are some very good staff that are shining through.'

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: SC038435

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: Sunfield Children's Homes Limited

Registered provider address: Clent Grove, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire DY9 9PB

Responsible individual: Caroline Bell

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspectors

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