

## **Children's homes - interim inspection**

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | <b>28/01/2016</b>      |
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | <b>SC039689</b>        |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | <b>Interim</b>         |
| <b>Provision subtype</b>       | <b>Children's home</b> |
| <b>Registered manager</b>      | <b>Post Vacant</b>     |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | <b>Jackie Line</b>     |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Previous Inspection date</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>18/08/2015</b>           |
| <b>Previous inspection judgement</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| <b>Enforcement action since last inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>None</b>                 |
| <b>This inspection</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                             |
| <p><b>The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection</b></p> <p>This home was judged <b>requires improvement</b> at the full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has <b>declined in effectiveness</b>.</p> <p>At the last full inspection Ofsted raised five requirements and two recommendations. Although progress has been made in some of the areas that were identified for improvement, three of the requirements have not been met.</p> <p>Young people do not make good enough educational progress. Some have struggled to sustain college placements or maintain alternative provision, despite the support of staff. Although a further option is currently being explored, two young people are not in education, training, or employment. Two young people of compulsory school age continue to have poor attendance, and for one this has deteriorated from 36% to 26%. Not all young people have an up to date personal education plan, and this contributes to insufficient progress to address areas of concern. Recommendations relating to education have been made at statutory reviews and planning meetings, but staff have not followed these up to achieve progress. Furthermore, no clear plans are in place to increase provision for those young people on a reduced educational timetable. Poor attendance and a lack of robust planning means that young people are missing out on valuable learning opportunities which may then restrict their future life opportunities.</p> <p>Routines at the home do not support learning. When young people are not in education staff do not consistently engage them in purposeful activity. Two young people told the inspector that they are bored in the day, and this contributes to their lack of motivation to get up in the morning. One young person claims staff spend too much time in the office. Observations made during the inspection, support that view. Staff give young people little direction to engage in constructive activity and clear plans are not in place. As a result, staff are failing in their duty to promote education and learning, and this may impact significantly on young people's future life chances.</p> <p>Some progress has been made when young people spend agreed time away from home as this is now more carefully managed. Risk assessments have been updated</p> |                             |

with regards to this, and staff now take action to satisfy themselves that young people are safe and well. Staff take appropriate action when young people go missing, and each young person has an individual missing from home plan which provides guidance about what to do in such circumstances. Triggers for this behaviour are known and understood by staff, but strategies employed to reduce it are having mixed results. For example, one young person who has experienced a recent spike in missing incidents is now beginning to settle. However, for a second young person missing episodes are increasing in frequency and length. Consequently, he continues to place himself at risk of harm, and further efforts are required to address this.

This inspection identified new concerns relating to risky behaviour including young people entering each other's rooms at night, and play fighting which has resulted in young people being hurt. Although these issues are known to managers and staff they are not highlighted in risk assessments, and insufficient action is taken to manage and minimise these risks. This is not good safeguarding practice.

The home has benefitted from a full programme of refurbishment. A second lounge provides additional space for young people and visitors, and the home is brighter, and more homely overall. Further action is needed to provide sufficient furniture in the computer room, and repair or remove a broken computer. Decisions still need to be made on how to utilise a room that is bare and empty, and a damaged window in the porch is in need of repair. Managers explained to the inspector that although a request to repair the window has been made, this has been refused because it is deemed not to present a health and safety risk. A damaged window is a hazard, being left boarded up gives a poor impression as you enter the home, and young people receive a message that they are not valued enough to live in a home that is well maintained.

Not all young people's bedrooms are kept in a reasonable state, demonstrating a lack of care and attention. Consequently, young people are not being helped sufficiently to look after their things, respect their rooms, and ensure their space is welcoming, clean, and tidy. The presentation of three out of five bedrooms were unacceptable on the day of the inspection.

Quality assurance monitoring has not improved between inspections. As a result, areas needing to be addressed are not clearly identified and prioritised. These include, educational progress, establishing consistent routines, ensuring young people's rooms are well maintained, engaging young people in constructive activity, addressing play fighting, reviewing and addressing night time disturbances, and improving the quality of risk assessments. Moreover, a lack of sufficient action in these areas means managers and staff do not understand what constitutes good standards of care, or work in accordance with the statement of purpose to safeguard young people and help them to fulfil their potential.

Not all significant incidents are reported in line with regulation. As a result, Ofsted

remained unaware of eight serious incidents until this inspection. This does not enable the regulator to effectively carry out its monitoring function, and does not fully promote the welfare and safety of young people.

Between inspections the registered manager has left, and prior to this she was absent for significant periods. Inconsistent management has limited the progress of the home over recent months. Interim arrangements are now in place and a suitably qualified, and experienced manager is providing cover until a new appointment is made. She understands that improvements need to be made, and is motivating staff who welcome her guidance and support. Action is being taken to review young people's care plans where they are not making progress in order to determine a way forward. Unfortunately, she has only been available part-time due to being the registered manager of another home. Following this inspection, the organisation has given assurances that her presence will now be on a full time basis until a new manager is recruited for the home.

Some progress has been made since the last inspection. For example, most staff have received first aid training, and those that have not are due to complete a course imminently. This means that there is always at least one member of staff on duty with an appropriate qualification, and this promotes young people's well-being.

Action has been taken to ensure that people carrying out external monitoring visits are now sufficiently independent. As a result, these arrangements are more robust, and will provide an additional level of scrutiny to the way the home is managed and young people are supported.

Young people no longer pay disproportionate sums of money by way of financial reparation. The interim manager is in the process of taking on board comments from the independent visitor to offer guidance to staff about working with young people to modify aspects of their behaviour that are unacceptable.

Young people's health needs continue to be well met. All are registered quickly with relevant health services, and are supported to attend routine and specialist appointments. Links are made with mental health services to seek advice where necessary, and young people are supported to engage with specialist workers to improve their emotional well-being.

A period of unsettling and often challenging behaviour has occurred between inspections, particularly in respect of one young person. In managing this behaviour staff demonstrate that they have the resilience to stick with young people even in the most testing of times. Stability has now resumed, and the young person is being appropriately supported and prepared for a transition to semi-independence.

Young people spoken to as part of the inspection said they get on with most staff, and a real positive for them is learning more practical skills like cooking and

shopping, and how this helps them to be more independent. They are clear that they are involved in care planning, and contribute to decisions being made about their lives. Most young people said they feel safe, although two young people reported concerns in respect of play fighting, and showed the inspector bruising and marks they had sustained as a result of this. Observations on inspection highlighted how when together and without focus, young people become silly and play fighting ensues. Staff need to be more vigilant to this, provide appropriate levels of supervision, and intervene more quickly to address this concern.

Five requirements and one recommendation are raised to secure improvements moving forward. Three requirements raised are repeated from the full inspection, and one of these is subject to enforcement action.

## Information about this children's home

This service is a local authority children's home. The home provides care and accommodation for six young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

## Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement    |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 18/08/2015      | Full            | Requires improvement    |
| 26/03/2015      | Interim         | Sustained effectiveness |
| 14/01/2015      | Full            | Adequate                |
| 14/02/2014      | 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   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>8: The education standard*</p> <p>In order to meet the education standard the registered person must ensure</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff -</p> <p>(iii) understand the barriers to learning that each child may face and take appropriate action to help the child to overcome such barriers;</p> <p>(vi) maintain regular contact with each child's education and training provider, including engaging with the provider and the placing authority to support the child's education and training and to maximise the child's achievement;</p> <p>(x) help each child to attend education or training in accordance with the expectations in the child's relevant plans.</p> | 07/03/2016 |
| <p>11: The positive relationships standard</p> <p>In order to meet the positive relationships standard the registered person must ensure</p> <p>(2)(a) that staff —</p> <p>(xi) de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 07/03/2016 |
| <p>12: The protection of children standard</p> <p>In order to meet the protection of children standard the registered person must ensure</p> <p>2(a) that staff -</p> <p>(i) 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 a child.</p> <p>(d) that the premises used for the purpose of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health.</p>                                                                                                                  | 07/03/2016 |
| <p>13: The leadership and management standard</p> <p>In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person must enable inspire and lead a culture in relation to the children's home that -</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 07/03/2016 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <p>1(a) helps children aspire to their full potential; and<br/>(b) promotes their welfare<br/>(2) In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to –<br/>(a) lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose;<br/>(f) understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home;<br/>(h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home.</p> |            |
| <p>40: Notification of a serious event<br/>Ensure the registered person notifies HMCI and each other relevant person without delay of all events outlined in this regulation (Regulation 40(4)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 07/03/2016 |

\* These requirements are subject to statutory requirement notice.

## Recommendations

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

- Ensure that staff meet children's basic day to day needs and physical necessities in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child, and value them as an individual. Specifically in relation to supporting young people to maintain their bedrooms to a good standard (The guide to the quality standards, page 15, paragraph 3.7).

## **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*.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*, which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, workbased learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2016