

Children's homes - interim inspection

Inspection date	08/03/2016
Unique reference number	SC039897
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Registered person address	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Council House, Mary Stevens Park, STOURBRIDGE, West Midlands, DY8 2AA

Responsible individual	Merlin Joseph
Registered manager	Melanie Hollman-Dryden
Inspector	Andrew Hewston

Inspection date	08/03/2016
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 last full inspection. At this interim inspection Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. Young people progress well at the home and systems have developed since the last inspection to ensure that they are involved with education to a greater degree and have positive relationships with the staff team. Two requirements were made at the last inspection and one recommendation. All of these have been met due to; clarity regarding the new responsible individual for the home, improvements in risk assessments and all young people having placement plans that are well known by the staff team. Admissions take place on both a planned and emergency basis, the latter being completed rarely but when required by the local authority. Looked After Children documentation is completed by placing social workers and give good guidance to the team regarding the expectations of the placement. This is incorporated within placement planning. Young people are involved with the planning process, with a young person being involved with a review on the day of the inspection, ensuring that their views are taken into consideration. Staff work directly with young people to enhance their time at the home. Key work sessions occur regularly giving them a time to discuss issues within the home. Good house meetings also allow them to talk about plans for the home, menus, activities and issues such as smoking, and education. A recent meeting included developing ideas to improve the young people's guide for the home. All young people have educational placements. Attendance differs between them with some achieving better than others. Staff consistently encourage young people to succeed, with staff attending a market on the day of the inspection to support a young person selling items as part of their college course. An enthusiastic staff team promote a range of activities that young people can be involved with. Day trips and holidays have been enjoyed by young people. Contact arrangements are in place from the point of young people's admission, with families visiting the home or young people going out to them. A social worker	

stated that 'if the home hadn't kept such good contact with (the young person) and their family then he wouldn't be going back home and doing so well.'

Monitoring systems help to develop the home and promote change. External monthly monitoring includes discussions with the young people and professionals involved with them, getting a good idea of their progression. Action points raised are responded to quickly by the management team. Internal monitoring includes summaries of the home's development and action points for further improvement. Reports are not overly detailed, showing that the manager is able to examine the core issues within the home.

The home has experienced unsettled periods since the last inspection, including events where young people have been missing or displayed challenging behaviours. Incidents are reported well to the necessary agencies, including the action steps taken to decrease possible future incidents. Notifications are received swiftly.

Young people are aware of their ability to complain, through information shared within key working and young people's meetings. Concerns raised are examined and young people spoken to, ensuring they are happy.

Behaviour management systems are well known by staff. A consistent approach ensures that the use of restraint is rare and young people receive both sanctions and rewards in response to differing behaviours.

Young people have been missing from the home. Staff refer such incidents to the police and the local authority missing young person's team. Effective responses to such events include case reviews and the development of strategies to decrease the 'pull' of inappropriate peer groups. Records of missing events show good chronologies of events and highlight the work staff have completed to keep the young people in the home, so decreasing concerns about their safety.

Staff work with a wide range of agencies to ensure that young people are both safe and progress at the home. The Police visit the home on a regular basis to stay informed of those at the home, offering support where necessary. Links with local authority resources relating to missing, health services, education and safeguarding are strong, improving outcomes for young people.

Information about this children's home

This home is one of five local authority homes. It is registered for up to four young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties and is situated within an urban area.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
16/09/2015	CH- Full	Good
19/02/2015	CH - Interim	Sustained effectiveness
28/08/2014	CH - Full	Good
18/03/2014	CH - Interim	Good progress

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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