

SC039897

Registered provider: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is one of four local authority homes. It is registered for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and is situated in an urban area.

Inspection dates: 29 to 30 August 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 21 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Young people have excellent relationships with staff.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are central to their care planning and

organisation of the home.

- Staff work well together and receive good support and guidance from the registered manager.
- Young people say that they feel safe, comfortable and happy in the home.
- A committed staff team cares for young people. The staff team provides consistent care based on the individual needs of the young people.
- Staff are very positive in their approach to education and its value for young people's futures.
- Young people are given encouragement to keep in contact with family members and maintain friendships.
- Young people have clear risk assessments in place to help minimise and address the risk of harm.
- The registered manager is enthusiastic in her approach and understands the home's strengths well, and is equally receptive to new ideas and different ways of working.

The children's home's areas for development:

- Some young people have been admitted outside of the admission criteria set out in the statement of purpose.
- Although members of staff monitor young people's use of the internet, this practice is carried out on an ad hoc basis.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
27/09/2016	Full	Good
08/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
16/09/2015	Full	Good

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
In order to meet the leadership and management standard the registered person is to, with specific reference to admissions, 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. (Regulation 13 (2)(a))	27/09/2017

Recommendation

- Children should have access to a computer and the internet to support their education and learning, unless there are specific safeguarding reasons why this would be inappropriate. In such cases, the home should consider whether and how it can support the child to access a computer and the internet safely. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 25, paragraph 5.20)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are provided with a good quality of care delivered by a committed staff team. As a result, young people develop excellent relationships with staff, and they appreciate the support afforded to them. One young person recently sent a thank you card to the registered manager to say thank you for helping him out and that he really appreciates it.

Young people have personalised care and risk management plans that staff keep under review. These plans take account of the full range of young people's needs and identify their daily support requirements.

Young people understand the importance of good health and are supported by staff to attend health appointments.

The registered manager ensures that young people attend educational settings according to their needs and abilities. One young person recently completed his GCSEs and is due to start a computer course at college in September. Staff work in partnership with education departments and other relevant professionals to ensure that young people have every opportunity to increase their academic ability and to reach their full potential.

Staff ensure that young people are able to maintain contact with their family and friends. Staff will facilitate contact by providing transport. This enables important connections to be maintained. Staff also support young people's friendships in the local community. The staff and young people recently organised a community charity fundraising event at the home. This was a fantastic experience for all involved.

Young people take part in a range of activities inside the home and in the local community. This provides them with opportunities to have fun and to build confidence and self-esteem. For example, one young person recently went on a holiday to the seaside with staff. This enables young people to socialise with others of a similar age, have new experiences and develop hobbies, skills and interests.

Young people benefit from making a positive contribution to their home. Staff consult with young people through regular residents' meetings. Each young person has a key worker, and meetings between key workers and young people take place at regular intervals. These opportunities allow young people to have their views heard and to have an input on their own care.

Despite some challenging behaviours and damage to the property from some young people, the registered manager ensures that the home is generally kept to a good standard. Young people are supported to personalise their bedrooms. This practice provides young people with a sense of ownership and belonging.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Young people say that they feel safe. Their complex needs do not inhibit their opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities and events. Comprehensive risk assessments outline measures needed to support the young people in their environment, community and during activities.

Staff understand young people's individual vulnerabilities and behavioural triggers. Staff respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly to ensure that all measures are in place to keep young people safe. Members of staff use the support of partner agencies in safeguarding situations. This collaborative working with the police and placing authorities ensures that young people stay safe. However, although members of staff monitor young people's use of the internet, this practice is carried out on an ad hoc basis. This practice hinders the opportunity for effective monitoring and review.

Staff formulate and update effective behaviour management plans in consultation with parents and other professionals. This enables staff to implement strategies which are

consistent to support young people to manage challenging behaviour. Staff offer encouragement and reassurance to reduce young people's anxieties. This includes using distraction techniques. This has resulted in the home not requiring the use of physical interventions.

The registered manager ensures that young people live in a home that provides physical safety and security. Health and safety checks are regularly undertaken. Records show that young people and staff regularly practise evacuation of the building so that they know how to respond in an emergency. The home has established systems and structures in place to maintain safe practices and fulfil health and safety obligations.

The registered manager ensures that staff receive safeguarding training and that they have a good understanding of their duties in promoting young people's welfare. Staff are familiar with the particular vulnerabilities associated with each young person, and use this knowledge to develop behaviour management plans and risk assessments. Staff are insightful of risks that young people can face including self-harm, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation, and monitor young people's behaviour for any emerging concerns. This level of surveillance helps to keep young people safe.

The excellent relationships between staff and young people mean that young people feel safe and secure in their home. When young people go missing, staff know what action to take to promote young people's safety. Staff are proactive in their approach. There are effective procedures and protocols to promote young people's safe return. During these incidents, staff work closely with key partners such as the police. A police officer told the inspector that 'I have a very good relationship with [the] children's home, they keep me updated with new residents and always follow policy when we have missing persons. They keep police updated when a missing young person has returned.'

Staff notice the different aspects of a young person's development and enthusiastically celebrate all achievements. Young people respond positively to praise, and their confidence and self-esteem are increased because of this practice.

The registered manager ensures that there is a robust recruitment process so that only suitable adults get to work with young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager has been in post since April 2003 and is suitably qualified. All members of staff are qualified to the level 3 diploma in residential childcare. The registered manager is innovative in her approach, understands the home's strengths and is receptive to new ideas and different ways of working. This ensures that the staff team always meets the needs of young people to a high standard.

The registered manager ensures that all staff receive regular supervision that provides the opportunity to review young people's care as well as considering their professional developmental needs. Staff retention is good and morale is high, with staff reporting that they feel well supported. The registered manager and staff model excellent professional

standards in all of their work, and demonstrate a high level of courtesy and respect towards the young people in their care.

A well-organised training matrix ensures that all staff stay up to date with current practice and gain the skills that they require to support young people. Staff complete training in particular areas such as understanding the risks of radicalisation. This ensures that staff keep their skills and knowledge up to date and are competent in looking after young people.

The registered manager ensures that there is regular monitoring by an independent visitor. These visits review the home's performance and young people's progress and identify areas for improvement.

There are effective and meaningful partnerships between the home, police and other safeguarding professionals to promote young people's safety and welfare. Communication between staff, young people, families, social workers and other professionals is excellent. Because of this collaborative approach, there is clear, coordinated support to meet young people's needs. A social worker commented, '(Manager's name) and her team are excellent at working in partnership with all professionals, to enable best outcomes to be achieved.'

The registered manager has ensured that the home's location risk assessment is reviewed on an annual basis. This means that staff have local intelligence regarding risks within the community. This promotes the opportunity for staff to protect young people from known areas of risk within the community.

There is a clear statement of purpose in place that details the aims and objectives of the home. This document emphasises the importance of effective admission processes, with the use of impact assessments as key to the decision-making process. On a number of occasions since the last inspection, the registered manager has been placed under pressure to admit young people into the home contrary to the statement of purpose. The inspector received assurances during the inspection from senior managers that this practice will not continue.

The registered manager continues to be confident and assertive in challenging others when they do not fulfil their responsibilities. This challenge helps to protect young people from risk and supports them to make meaningful progress. The registered manager's use of self-evaluation is well considered, regular and attention to detail is very good. This routine programme of self-assessment and review enables her to promote practice in which young people's needs are at the heart of the process.

Staff understand the ethos and values of the home and deliver them in practice. They have a true sense of care and go beyond expectations. Practice is based on a social learning nurturing approach to care for the young people, which is solution focused and reflective. These approaches to care help young people to build up the confidence, self-esteem and resilience that they need to overcome difficult past experiences.

There were no requirements or recommendations arising from the last inspection.

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: SC039897

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Council House, Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 2AA

Responsible individual: Susan Butcher

Registered manager: Melanie Hollman-Dryden

Inspector

Lisa Walsh: social care inspector

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