

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	24/11/2016
Unique reference number	SC040191
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Break
Registered provider address	Schofield House, 1 Spar Road Norwich, England, Norwich NR6 6BX

Responsible individual	Hilary Richards
Registered manager	Lee Roberts
Inspector	Deirdra Keating

Inspection date	24/11/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Improved effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC040191

Summary of findings

The children's home's provision is good because:

- Staff actively seek to build strong relationships and have a good rapport with the children.
- Children do not take risks with their personal safety, and they adhere to safety rules in place.
- Safeguarding procedures are fully understood and work well to safeguard children and staff.
- The staff team is dedicated and conscientious in its care of the children.
- Fresh, healthy, home-cooked meals provide children with a balanced diet and generate a homely atmosphere.
- Staff support and facilitate good school attendance.
- The home is managed well. Admissions are given full consideration, and group dynamic risk assessment encompasses all areas.
- The decor is well maintained and has creative touches. This results in a home that is aesthetically colourful and feels cosy.
- Community and leisure activities are not utilised by all children.
- Training in managing children's behaviour in a therapeutic style is required to support staff's understanding and knowledge of associated behaviours.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Support children to access relevant leisure passes and encourage them to participate in activities in the community and wider if appropriate. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 31, paragraph 6.6)
- Lead and manage the home in a way that delivers the ethos, outcomes and approach set out in the home's statement of purpose. This is in regard to providing regular training for staff in a more therapeutic approach to shape the ethos of the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 52, paragraph 10.4)

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a charitable organisation and provides care for up to four young people who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
18/11/2015	Full	Good
16/02/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
08/05/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children benefit from individualised care, delivered in a family home environment. The staff team genuinely cares for each child, supporting them to build fundamental attachments to key adults. Success with individual children has resulted in long-term placements. This highlights individual progress and achievement. The children are increasingly confident and are comfortable in sharing their views. There is an expectation from the children that their views are valued and that they have a right to voice these. All children talk about staff positively. Strong relationships between the staff and the children have enabled the children to develop their communication skills. The children learn about managing their emotions, resolving conflict and compromise. Concerns are raised by the children with the full support of the staff. All concerns receive a written response. This is written in a simple but pertinent way in response to issues raised. Concerns are given priority and timely attention. This provides a safeguard and gives the children an active voice in the home. An innovative new member of staff has revolutionised the food. A review has been completed of high-sugar foods and the impact on healthy eating has led to radical change. This has resulted in fresh, tasty meals that are protein and vegetable-rich. This is in the early stages of implementation. The children are well mannered during meal times. They try the wide range of fresh vegetables, which are presented to look colourful and appetising. The staff provide good role models, eating and socialising with children as a family. This teaches the children social skills and educates them about a healthy balanced diet. All children regularly attend education which is tailored to their current needs. Staff provide transport, and are flexible and conscientious about ensuring that the children get to school. There are exceptions, as while the majority of children have improved their engagement and attendance, there has been a decline for one child following a long period of excellent attendance. This is due to a dislike of mornings and difficulty in enduring the pressure of a GCSE syllabus. Attendance expectations are consistently upheld by the staff, and consequences such as the loss of the evening activity club or the internet are applied. This builds good routines. The children benefit from this structure, gaining confidence in their abilities. There are a wide range of exciting activities available, and staff are good at facilitating these. The children attend after-school community clubs and enjoy	

weekend trips with staff. They enjoy a wide range of activities and community links, keeping weekday evenings busy and structured. However, staff are unable to get all of the children to participate, resulting in one child having experiences which are somewhat limited.

Preparation for moving on and educating the children regarding independence is good. The staff continually build on life skills and a designated team provides an in-house moving-on service. Follow-on work for care leavers is very good. The children who have left visit the home and contact staff. One visited for support, another visited to see the staff and a third is living nearby and in regular contact with staff. The children continue to use the established relationships that they built with the staff as support and are prepared practically for living independently.

This home is well maintained and decorated. Positive quotes and coordinated decor give a vibrant and welcome feel. Bedrooms are furnished in accordance with children's choices and are comfortable. The children respect one another's property, meaning that belongings left around the home are safe.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The staff are fully aware of the risks to each child. They actively use the guidance in each risk assessment to reduce the likelihood of future incidents. Risk assessments are updated by the staff. This is monitored through a monthly audit, to ensure that recent incidents and changes in behaviour inform risk management plans. There have been some allegations made by children against various staff members. Safeguarding procedures have guided practice, ensuring that those staff remain off duty while investigations are undertaken. These have all been referred to the designated officer and the child's social worker. Investigations are documented, and a robust risk assessment protects children and staff. The children keep themselves safe and engage in very few risky behaviours. They adhere to the house rules, and there are no concerns of child sexual exploitation, antisocial behaviour or substance abuse. There has been one short-duration instance of a child leaving without prior agreement. This occurred when being missing from school resulted in missing an evening club, which the child did not accept. Staff followed the child to establish their safe whereabouts, resulting in a swift return. Preventative protocols are agreed with the police who visit the home and are known to the staff and the children. This helps to ensure children's safety	

in the community.

The home is somewhat unsettled following changes to the group. Dynamics are tense at times, and this has resulted in one physical intervention. There are a number of incidents that reflect rivalry between some children regarding bedtimes and the attention of staff. The staff are working on preventive actions and keeping the children purposefully engaged. They use a variety of consequences that link well to the event, showing that they think about what is meaningful. The views of children are recorded and some form part of the sanction given, showing reflection and remorse.

The staff use boundaries agreed by the team and actions from local authority reviews inform these. The staff try to understand children's presenting behaviours and diagnoses. They implement boundaries that help the children to feel contained. There is, however, limited understanding of how traumatic experiences can specifically shape children's behaviour. This does not always provide a holistic approach in line with the home's aims.

There are several new staff appointments. Recruitment is undertaken in line with organisational policy. It is recorded in an electronic database with a hard copy profile sheet. Background checks, previous experience and performance are explored before they commence employment. This ensures that the staff are suitable for their role in working with children.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager was appointed in May 2016. He is widely experienced in residential child care and holds a level 5 qualification. This appointment has been smoothly assisted by the deputy who has worked extremely well to provide the children and staff with continuity of care. The cohesive staff team is a key strength. The staff work well together in support of one another. This generates a positive and upbeat atmosphere of a team with good morale and shared goals. This benefits the children. Supervision is taking place with regularity, despite a high number of new staff. A sample of records shows that the managers prioritise the supervision of new staff. This ensures that they are supported in their roles. The organisation is proactive at providing training resources and opportunities. All	

staff are either trained to required levels or enrolled to start. Mandatory training is embedded in induction. However, there are inconsistencies in the approach to managing some incidents. The team would benefit from a therapeutic-based training input to provide bespoke strategies for individuals.

The organisation allows managers the autonomy to make admission decisions, based on the priority of the existing placement group. Full consideration has been given to admitting a child to the home. The planning spanned a month, involving tea visits and an overnight stay. Despite initial tensions, the placement meets the child's needs well. Managing the equilibrium in the home provides stability and security for the children.

The manager is aware of areas for developing the home. Shortfalls in working case files have been highlighted in monitoring and addressed using a monthly audit tool. This ensures that staff provide documents that reflect the latest decisions about the children's care. External monitoring is taking place and actions are reviewed at every visit.

The consensus of professionals spoken to is that they gave positive feedback about the staff and the consistently good care provided. Communication between the home, the school, social workers and other professionals is good.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

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 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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