

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040631
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Surrey County Council
Registered person address	Surrey County Council, Children's & Safeguarding Service Runnymede Centre, Chertsey Road ADDLESTONE Surrey KT15 2EP
Responsible individual	Louise Warren
Registered manager	Terence Brooks
Date of last inspection	11/03/2014

Inspection date	13/08/2014
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

This inspection	
Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for children and young people	good
Quality of care	good
Keeping children and young people safe	good
Leadership and management	good

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	good
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This is a very good service with many strengths. The management and staff team show continued commitment in improving the quality of care. The service produces clear and comprehensive records that provide a story of children's and young people's time at the home. Comprehensive assessment and planning ensures that individual needs are identified with work carried out to address issues. As a result children and young people thrive in a setting that provides consistency, support and a nurturing environment. This enables them to develop emotionally, socially and educationally.

Children and young people receive well planned and individualised care and their views are taken into account regarding the operation and practice of the home. Staff are committed to providing good quality care and this promotes positive outcomes. Relationships between staff, children and young people are respectful, professional and trusting. They respond extremely well to the relationships they form with staff and clearly enjoy their presence. Staff have high aspirations for children and young people and this contributes to their progress, particularly with regards to behaviour management, education attendance and emotional resilience.

There is a full, experienced and permanent staff team and this promotes stability. Young people say they feel safe and protected and are supported to keep safe when

out in the community.

Quality assurance is vigorous, which enables staff to have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the home and to act on areas that require improving.

Children and young people say that the staff team are inspirational when they speak to them, and that staff are caring. Comments from children and young people such as ` I have learnt that people really do care ` shows the positive impact staff have on the children and young people.

One requirement and four recommendations have been made at this inspection. These relate to: upgrading the bathrooms, improving ways of evidencing the good work staff do with children and young people in meeting targets and outcomes, developing records that evidence the involvement of children and young people in the drawing up care plans and risk assessments, better evidencing the effectiveness of fire drills and better organising of health and safety records.

Full report

Information about this children's home

This home is run and managed by the local authority. The home offers care and accommodation for up to eight young people who have emotional and, or behavioural issues.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/03/2014	Interim	good progress
04/11/2013	Full	good
23/01/2013	Interim	good progress
13/06/2012	Full	good

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

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 Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
31 (2001)	The registered person shall ensure that all parts of the children's home used by the children are kept clean and reasonably decorated and maintained; in particular the upgrading of bathrooms. (Regulation 31 (2)(d))	31/10/2014

Recommendations

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

- consider reviewing the organisation of the health and safety check records (NMS 22.4)
- better evidence the recording of the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills (NMS 10.9)
- consider more ways of evidencing how children and young people communicate their views on all aspects of their care and support; in particular their involvement in the drawing up of care plans and risk assessments (NMS 1.3)
- further develop the process for evidencing the progress children and young people make. (NMS 22)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **good**

Children and young people make very good progress while living at the home. Comments received from professionals confirm the home provides good care, for example, 'this is a good home that provides good care for the children and young people'.

Children and young people are well supported to understand their backgrounds and to develop positive self-views and resilience. The stable staff team and the excellent relationships developed, enables children and young people to reflect on their pasts without fear and in a safe environment. Comments from children and young people such as 'I am able to talk to anyone here about anything' reflects the trust they have in the staff team. In addition this enables them to address and understand their previous and current situation. Children and young people are taught to appreciate their individual cultures and to be respectful towards others. They feel valued and see the home as a stable and long term part of their lives.

Children and young people receive very good health care and make good progress in addressing any areas they need to, from attending regular dental and medical appointments to addressing drug misuse. During their placement, they are supported to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and, where possible encouraged to take responsibility for their own health, particularly as they approach leaving care. All specific health needs are known to staff and access to specialists is facilitated. At times young people may refuse to engage with identified specialists, but staff do not give up and find other avenues to follow; for example the involvement of the local police community support officer regarding smoking and drug use.

Children and young people benefit from living in a home where the value of education is promoted and encouraged. They make very good progress in respect of their starting points. Previous poor attenders now commit to full time education. One young person said that 'staff helped me realise that having a good education is important and I now go to school every day'. Staff go that extra mile to ensure young people access the best education and receive high levels of support. As a result all children and young people attend appropriate education establishments and progress well.

Children and young people enjoy a variety of activities. These include Army Cadets, football, horse riding, diving, and basketball. They also enjoy cinema, bowling, theme parks and outings to cities. They experience going away on holiday, both in the UK and abroad. All trips and activities are risk assessed. The children and young people enjoy and learn from their new experiences and are safeguarded while doing so.

Children and young people are readily able to contact families and friends. Staff work

very closely with all professionals in relation to restrictions of contact that can be complex to manage. Friends are welcomed into the home and often join in meal times.

They are supported to gain independence skills. Staff are very well informed of individual challenges and the readiness of young people to engage positively and successfully in the programme put in place. As a result, young people develop their skills and knowledge, at their own pace and to a good degree, especially when taking their starting points into account.

Quality of care

good

A real strength of the home are the relationships staff achieve with the children and young people. These are both constructive and positive, with clear and strong boundaries. Good parenting skills are embedded in the staff practice. The application of consistent routines, results in children and young people feeling very well cared for. Comments such as `staff are cool`, and `staff are good at caring for us` shows the positive impact this consistent practice has on children and young people.

Children and young people are encouraged to voice their views and opinions in numerous ways; daily interaction with staff, key worker meetings, the independent visitor who visits once a month and therapy sessions. Work is carried out prior to placement reviews, to ensure that young people have either the confidence to participate themselves or provide staff speaking on their behalf with their views and opinions.

Children and young people know how to make a complaint and stated `staff tell us how to make a complaint and we have forms we complete which go to the manager.` They confirmed that all concerns and complaints are taken seriously and acted on quickly. In practice, the number of concerns raised are extremely low.

The value of education is embedded into the ethos of the home and staff work hard to improve the life chances of children and young people. They make good progress and benefit from staff support and guidance to develop socially as well as academically. Staff relationships with educational establishments have improved over the last few months with more day to day contact and feedback now in place.

Good quality care plans, detailed and highly individualised, outline how each child's and young person's needs will be met. They do not however evidence the level of input children and young people have into these plans and do not clearly show outcomes achieved by the children and young people.

A strength of the home and one thoroughly enjoyed by the children and young people is the food provision. A dedicated cook provides excellent quality meals that are taken in a supportive family style environment enabling social manners to be

applied and learnt. Children and young people say `the food is brilliant`.

Staff continue to develop excellent relationships with all external agencies and social work services and are not afraid to challenge any shortfalls, to ensure children and young people receive the support they need.

Feedback from one social worker stated` this is a nurturing, caring home and they communicate well with me`.

Children and young people enjoy an excellent range of activities which they have a voice in choosing. Staff participate in activities with them or allow them to engage independently, depending on their age and abilities.

The home is appropriately located with the Registered Manager currently completing a location review; in accordance with changing legislation that came into effect in April 2014. Suitable risk assessments are in place, taking the known risks into account, for example the closeness to the road. The maintenance of the home is, in general, good and children and young people make choices about its décor. They feel they have an investment in the home and the way it influences their lives. As a result, there is minimal damage to the property. Although many areas of the home have been subject to recent upgrading and redecoration the bathrooms are of a lesser standard, with broken tiles and bath panels that require attention in the very near future.

Keeping children and young people safe good

Very good arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect children and young people. Pro-active safeguarding practice means that all children and young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being. Young people report they feel safe at the home. `I feel safe here` and `staff help us to keep safe when we go out` are comments received during this inspection.

Staff are pro-active in supporting children's and young people's safety and they work in partnership with other agencies in order to facilitate this. Staff receive training and have guidance in place for them to follow, regarding child protection matters. This ensures they have the awareness and knowledge to promote children's and young people's safety. Appropriate referrals are made to child protection agencies. Some staff have recently received training around e-safety and sexual exploitation with the plan for all staff to undergo this training. Care plans identify each child's and young person's vulnerabilities and associated risks with strategies for the staff, children and young people to follow. Clear risk assessments and management protect children and young people, while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Regularly updated risk assessments ensure that the children and young people are continually guided and supported to be safe.

No child or young person has been missing for the home since the last inspection. Good arrangements are in place if a child or young person did go missing. Staff are aware of the dangers relating to the location of the home that children and young people may face when missing, such as road traffic and local parks. Staff work closely with the local police community support officers who regularly visit the home and who know the children and young people well.

Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. Bullying is not tolerated at any level. Staff consistently apply firm boundaries if they feel any child is at risk of bullying. The excellent relationships between staff, children and young people has resulted in mutual respect and trust. They feel comfortable in talking to staff about any concerns or worries they may have knowing staff will take immediate action if necessary. Sanctions and physical interventions are rare. When they do occur, staff follow strict procedures that ensure children's and young people's safety is further enhanced. Evidence shows any physical intervention is only used as a last resort to prevent injury to the child or young person, others or property. Overall behaviours have improved greatly since the children and young people first arrived at the home. They are proud of their achievements. A significant area of improvement has been in the reduction in self-harm. Young people identify the improvements they have made and relate this to staff support and intervention. One professional said `this home provides clear and consistent boundaries that create a sense of safety, organisation and regulation` and `staff set appropriate limits and provide a model for appropriate behaviour`.

Children and young people are protected by the home's robust recruitment procedures, which ensures that all necessary background checks are carried out before staff commence employment. Recruitment procedures ensure adults are safe to work with children and young people, whilst being of good character and integrity.

Any incident relating to safeguarding or child protection are promptly notified to the correct agency. Child protection agencies report no concerns about the home's management of such incidents.

All health and safety checks and inspections are undertaken at appropriate intervals ensuring it is a safe environment. This includes checks of firefighting equipment, alarm systems, electrical and gas installations. Records are messy and in need of being better organised. All young people know what to do in the event of a fire and regular drills ensure this knowledge is embedded in practice. Records do not clearly evidence the effectiveness of fire drills.

Leadership and management

good

The manager has been in post since January 1992, and became the Registered Manager in 2002. He is suitably qualified and experienced to fulfil his role. He has a certificate in children and young people's social care and a registered social worker qualification, plus a level 4 management qualification.

A strong management team is in place, even when the manager is not there. Staff are supported by senior staff who also consistently communicate high expectations of staff practice.

There is a full, experienced and permanent staff team and this promotes stability. Staff receive regular supervision and yearly appraisals. Excellent training is in place for all staff. They state that it is of high quality and enables them to learn and explore matters that are important for the care of the children and young people. Examples include the role of advocates, complicated grief and restorative justice. All staff have completed the necessary standard and recommended qualifications. This means that staff have good theoretical knowledge for ensuring the home is a positive experience for children and young people.

There is a clear and up to date Statement of Purpose for the home which describes what it intends to achieve and deliver. Additionally, there is a children's and young person's guide which ensures they are aware of what to expect and the support they will receive. These documents enable all relevant individuals to have a clear idea of how the home operates and aids correct placement planning. Current concerns around the wide age range, and the management difficulties this can cause, are being discussed at senior level in the local authority. The staff team are managing this current situation well; however consideration needs to, and is being given to future placement criteria.

Both internal and external monitoring of the home is effective. All documents are monitored and reviewed to identify any themes and patterns that may be impacting on children and young people's care. The monthly monitoring visits undertaken by an independent person includes talking to staff and young people about their experience at the home. The manager follows up any areas identified and takes appropriate action where relevant.

All records are stored safely and securely. They are checked regularly to ensure they are up to date and provide a clear and accurate history of each child's and young person's time at the home. All significant events are reported promptly to all relevant agencies, to ensure the home is accountable in promoting children's and young people's well-being.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. The manager and staff, however, know its many strengths and weaknesses, and has the capacity to continually develop and improve.

What inspection judgements mean

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Good	A service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements.
Adequate	A service that only meets minimum requirements.
Inadequate	A service that does not meet minimum requirements.

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The 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 relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the framework of inspection for children's homes.