

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC040633
Inspector	Chris Golbourn
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	Sharon Newton
Date of last inspection	27/03/2014

Inspection date	15/01/2015
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Previous inspection	good progress
Enforcement action since last inspection	none

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

Overall effectiveness

Judgement outcome	outstanding
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The quality of care provided by the staff, and their commitment, enables the children and young people to continue to make and sustain exceptionally good progress.

Professionals involved with the home, and social workers supporting the children and young people, report staff promote the very best positive outcomes for young people and are skilful in supporting them through difficult periods. One professional stated, 'They provide a five star service, the difference they have made in this child's life is immense'.

The home is managed by an experienced qualified manager and very stable staff team, who offer support and a structure that celebrates and values individual experiences and qualities. Staff listen to and respond well to the children and young people's points of view and ideas to improve the quality of care they receive in the home. Care plans are personalised and detailed and clearly illustrate that the young people are fully involved and contribute to the decisions made about their lives and plans for their futures.

This is an extremely well managed home with a highly committed and dedicated Registered Manager and staff team. The home's Statement of Purpose, and young

people's information guide, provide a very clear insight into the type of care and support each child or young person will receive.

No requirements or recommendations were made at the last inspection. One recommendation has been made, this time, to improve practice in relation to the maintenance of a bathroom.

Full report

Information about this children's home

The home, which is owned and managed by a local authority, provides care and accommodation for up to five children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
27/03/2014	Interim	good progress
14/11/2013	Full	outstanding
12/02/2013	Interim	good progress
11/10/2012	Full	good

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

Recommendations

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

- ensure the home provides a comfortable and homely environment and is well maintained and decorated. This is in relation to the amelioration required to the children's bathroom.(NMS 10.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Children and young people benefit from outstanding care that is personalised to their individual needs. They talk to staff and other professionals about their past difficulties and experiences and develop an understanding of their backgrounds. They express themselves confidently and are able to inform visitors about how they feel and why. From their starting points, each one has made effective and sustained progress. As a result their confidence has grown and they continue to develop their abilities to make choices in a supportive environment.

They are well supported to overcome difficulties, to achieve positive change in their outlook and prospects. A social worker reports that the children and young people see this as their 'home from home' where they make exceptional progress. One of the young stated, 'I am really happy here because they take good care of me and they help me'.

The children and young people engage confidently with staff and help in the choosing, preparation and presentation of their meals. They talk knowledgeably about how they need to eat a healthy diet and the health benefits associated with this. They joke with each other as to who has the better diet and who likes what type of foodstuffs. One young person stated that they like to eat sweets but that 'everything is in moderation'.

Other young people are extremely proud of their efforts and how they are need to exercise, as well to stay fit. They reported that they enjoy using the trampoline, playing football and cycling.

All of the children and young people attend education in the community and they are supported to access this by staff. Their attendance is excellent and they are making outstanding progress in relation to their individual starting points. They are engaged in an extensive range of activities which they decide upon and choose for themselves such as Scouts, St Johns Ambulance Brigade and swimming. As a result, the children and young people enjoy the same opportunities as any other child. They have opportunities to visit friends who in return visit the home.

The views, wishes and feelings of the children and young people are core to the organisation of the home. The children and young people make choices about how they spend their time such as going out with staff or becoming involved in activities with the other residents. The staff also recognise that if a child or young person wishes to have some time alone this is managed in a safe and positive way.

The children and young people put forward their views, in confident way, to staff, which would benefit not just themselves but the home in general: for instance use of

personal electronics, such as smartphones, could start at 12 years of age.

Staff at the home work extremely hard, in partnership with social workers, to ensure that the children and young people benefit from contact with their families and those who are close to them. The actions of the staff go above and beyond what is expected of them. When necessary staff will also appropriately challenge any contact issues which may be to the detriment of the child. As a result the children and young people are able to remain in contact with their families and friends in a safe and nurtured way: this will ultimately build upon existing positive relationships and sustain them in the longer term.

The young people in the home are being well prepared for adulthood. They are increasing in their own self-confidence; learning how to manage budgets; shopping with staff; and learning how to manage their behaviours in a more productive way.

Quality of care

outstanding

Staff provide a caring and stimulating atmosphere in which the children and young people thrive. The experiences of the children and young people are considerably enhanced by the exceptional standard of care provided by the staff: as a result the progress and development they make from their individual starting point is excellent. Professionals, and social workers, are very positive about the standard of care in the home and the impact this has for the children and young people. They report that the levels of care and support the children and young people receive enables them to sustain consistently their progress across all of their areas of development. The children and young people have very positive relationships with staff and enjoy spending time with them. These relationships are founded on mutual respect and trust: humour and banter between them is enjoyed. One of the young people stated, 'We want them all to be on shift more'.

Staff show that they are highly knowledgeable about the needs and circumstances of each individual child. As a result, staff engage exceptionally well with them, providing support and reassurances when their anxieties are raised. Through excellent communications skills and strategies, staff enable the children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings in a safe way. As a result, they are able to make positive choices. Staff listen to the young people's views and, wherever possible, act on them: if however this is not possible, staff explain in depth to the child or young person the reasons for this and empower them to make other choices. The children and young people have access to, and are actively encouraged to engage with, independent advocates. One young person stated, 'I can talk to staff if I am unhappy or angry - they are always there for me'.

Staff plan exceedingly well for each individual child and young person: they place them at the centre of their practice. They are exceptionally knowledgeable about each child or young person's needs. Through a highly personalised approach to care

planning, each child or young person's character is allowed to shine. The cultural religious and ethnic needs, along with any linguistic diversity of each individual child or young person, is included in the care planning. As a result of this, staff are able to remove barriers to participation in events inside or outside the home and children and young people are able to engage in all activities.

Children and young people's health care needs are met, through the staff working exceptionally well with parents, health care professionals and other appropriate partner agencies. The staff, working in partnership with others, create plans which are highly personalised and tailored to each child and young person's needs. As a result, the support offered addresses their specific health and behavioural related issues.

The aspirations of each child and young person are a high priority for staff. The staff actively pursue the best opportunities for the children and young people to enable them to enjoy every opportunity and live life to the full. Staff work exceptionally closely, with schools, to ensure that plans are consistently applied. As a result, the children and young people are provided with exceptional care and support.

The home is located in a quiet residential neighbourhood. Each of the children and young people's rooms is highly personalised: photographs and achievements are displayed with pride. The children and young people are happy and very keen to discuss, with visitors, their rooms and how they have personalised them. Overall the home is maintained to a high standard. One bathroom needs to be redecorated and refitted: the Registered Manager is aware of this and is making appropriate challenge to the local authority departments responsible for conducting this work, to resolve the issue.

Keeping children and young people safe outstanding

All of the children and young people report that they live in a safe environment, where they are protected from harm, and feel safe. They are confident to talk to staff and visitors about situations which may cause them harm. They are particularly aware of relationships within the home and trust staff to act promptly to keep them safe. Staff are very alert to any potential risks and actively engage with the children and young people to let them know if they have any worries or concerns. Staff use their excellent knowledge and understanding of the child or young person, combined with their high levels of safeguarding knowledge and training, to protect them from risk of abuse. The staff have good links with other child protection professionals. Local authority designated officers and social workers report that the home is very proactive in consulting with them and, as a result, should any concerns arise swift action can be taken to the support children and young people.

The instances of children and young people going missing are non-existent.

However, there are clear protocols and procedures in place to manage this should it occur. The home's policies and procedures recognise the risks of children and young people going missing and how this is related to risks of exploitation.

The staff, and children and young people, contribute to, the regularly reviewed, risk management plans. The plans provide staff with information on how best to support the children and young people in times of crisis. This enables staff to protect children and young people.. Staff are excellent at recognising when a child, or young person, requires additional support and take decisive action to make sure they are protected and receive the support they need: this includes access to counsellors, advocates, or increased personal supervision by staff.

Staff are excellent role models using excellent negotiation skills and problem solving approaches. Staff routinely use de-escalation techniques to deal with negative behaviours, as a result the need for physical restraint is generally avoided. The views of children and young people are appropriately recorded in logs for this purpose.

Staff treat the children and young people fairly and with respect at all times. They work with a child, or young person, in a highly skilled, and sensitive way, helping them take responsibility for their behaviour. Staff have a very good understanding of the dynamics of the relationships between the children and young people. They offer very sound advice about specific issues such as bullying or appropriate relationships. As a result, the children and young people are able to recognise how their behaviours may sometimes be upsetting to others or perceived as bullying by them.

The environment, which the children and young people live in, is physically safe. They are protected from any hazards by a very comprehensive and detailed range of health and safety procedures, equipment check records and risk assessments. Staff conduct regular health and safety checks: these include fire drills with the children and young people to ensure that they know what to do in any case of emergency or evacuation. As a result, the children and young people discuss with visitors, in a clear and confident way, that they know exactly what to do in an emergency. Staff are very proactive in reporting issues relating to repair or damage so that there are high levels of maintenance in the home.

Recruitment, and the selection of people to work at the home, is subject to the local authority policy and procedures which are very thorough. The manager through direct contact with previous employers carefully ensures that previous employment records are highly scrutinised. As a result, children and young people who are kept safe by the robust practice. There are also suitable systems to ensure that visitors to the home are checked and supervised to protect the young people.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager has been in post since 1995 and is highly qualified to meet her responsibilities, with a level five qualification in management and with social work and nursing qualifications.

Children and young people live in a home that places their needs central in any service development and celebrates the progress they have made. The staff are competent, enthusiastic and have consistently high aspirations for the children and young people. They enjoy their company and are extremely proud of how well they are doing. They seek the same opportunities for the young people as they would for their own children. This approach, and its effectiveness, is evident in the positive progress the young people are. Social workers and other professionals say they hold the service in high regard because they can see the positive difference the home makes to the lives of the young people.

The Registered Manager, and other senior staff within the home, support the staff well. They attend regular formal supervision that follows a set agenda and is highly focused on the needs of the young people. This is followed by annual appraisals which reflect back on the staff member's year and how they have progressed in delivering services to the children and young people. The Managers invite social workers, and other professionals, to staff meetings to discuss how the needs of young people can be met more effectively.

The home's Statement of Purpose is clear and as a result, children and young people, their families and social workers are aware about the support and services the home provides. Managers review staffing levels in a proactive way. They increase staffing at specific times of need, such as when young people require additional support. Detailed records are kept which capture the lives of young people, charts their progress and consistently reflects their individual aspirations and challenges. Social workers say the communication from the home and the detailed paperwork they receive is a real strength of the provision. Regular review of all records in the home ensures that keyworkers provide staff with reliable and detailed information about the needs of the young people. For example, risk assessments are reviewed at least monthly and indicate improvements in each young person's ability to stay safe. However, there are some minor errors in records, such as the use of the word 'absconding' which does not reflect positively on the young people and, on a small number of occasions, records are not effectively cross referenced. This is a recording issue and does not detract from the exceptional levels of care and support provided to young people.

The Registered Manager and staff are committed to the continual development of their service and enhancing the outcomes for young people. This is supported by effective quality assurance systems, in the home and from an independent person from the organisation. The home's development plan is constantly under review. The home demonstrates a strong capacity for continuing improvement.

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.