

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Unique reference number	SC040633
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Sharon Newton
Inspector	James Harmon

Inspection date	23/02/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the home contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

SC040633

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is outstanding because:

- The young people are happy and make excellent progress while living in a welcoming environment. Care planning is thorough and well organised, containing an extensive amount of input from the young people.
- Highly valued and trusting relationships have developed between young people and the stable, experienced staff team. Staff are very nurturing, supportive and committed to the young people.
- Young people value education and make considerable progress. Staff proactively pursue educational opportunities for young people, resulting in an appreciation for school.
- The staff go above and beyond expectations to ensure that young people have good health. Regular meetings with the nurse responsible for children looked after have contributed to healthy outcomes.
- Staff have excellent communication with parents, allowing them to be actively involved, and to spend time with their children safely.
- Young people are kept extremely safe at all times. Safeguarding incidents are a rare occurrence and handled meticulously when they do arise. There are excellent links with the local police and designated officer. Robust recruitment procedures minimise the risk of unsuitable people working with the young people.
- Staff manage concerning behaviours of the young people effectively by teaching them to understand triggers for their behaviour and to manage their responses. Research in practice by staff continues to guide behaviour management effectively.
- The registered manager is highly experienced and actively involved in the care of the young people, making for precise monitoring of their progress. Staff excel in their duties due to the wide range of support from management. All previous requirements and recommendations were addressed through internal and external monitoring.
- Professionals praise the impact that the staff have on the young people and their ability to maintain a high level of professionalism. Effective collaborative working with other agencies has led to positive outcomes for young people.

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

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the registered person(s) meets 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
The registered person must ensure that the records are kept up to date in relation to training completed by staff. (Regulation 37(b))	20/04/2017

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
21/07/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
29/03/2016	Full	Outstanding
26/11/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
30/03/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Outstanding
Young people are extremely happy and make continuous progress while residing in the home. They benefit from exceptional planning and personalised care by staff, which is documented extensively in their individual placement plans. The easy-to-read documents contain plenty of input from the young people. A professional said, 'The reports produced by the staff are second to none, very personal and user-friendly. The young people definitely have ownership.' The 24-hour management plan provides consistency in the care for young people as it provides a detailed synopsis of how their day is structured and managed. Records reflect that staff listen to the young people effectively and act on their behalf. The young people were eager to engage and express their views during the inspection. They all felt that staff prioritise their wishes and feelings by having honest conversations informally and formally. Young people were seen throughout the inspection, specifically at dinner, conversing with staff about their day, exchanging ideas and general chat. Several young people that struggled to express themselves previously, due to low self-esteem, have shown significant improvement in their self-confidence as a result of their daily conversations with staff. Young people are flourishing due to developing highly valued relationships with the staff. Staff provide young people with nurturing, personalised care with a vast amount of emotional warmth, positive touch, guidance and boundaries. Staff have a great deal of enthusiasm and a clear understanding when speaking about the young people. A professional praised the staff: 'They do what any parent would do, not just the basics. The staff take the time to develop trusting relationships with the young people.' Young people that leave the home benefit from staff organising a well-planned transition. A young person said, 'Without the support of staff, I am sure that my new placement would have not gone so well. I am not good at meeting new people; we slowly built up to overnights. Now they visit weekly and communicate with my carer to keep her in the loop when I visit the home.' Young people achieve optimum health outcomes. They are supported to attend all scheduled appointments in relation to their health and well-being. The nurse responsible for children looked after has regular meetings with management to go through health plans, review immunisations and address health needs as they develop. The nurse said, 'Young people often seek informal advice from me when I drop by the home for tea with the young people.' The young people eat quality,	

home-cooked meals, further supporting their healthy lifestyle.

Staff encourage young people to engage actively in their designated therapeutic service, resulting in young people regularly attending appointments and improving emotionally. When appropriate, staff teach the young people to administer their own medication independently. A young person, under the guidance of staff, demonstrated his ability to administer his insulin shot while explaining the purpose of each step.

The young people value education and are achieving. Staff actively engage with headteachers, virtual heads and coordinators of alternative provisions. This contributes towards young people improving their attendance and academic performance. Some young people have been successfully reintroduced to mainstream school after considerable time away. Young people's achievements are celebrated and acknowledged.

Young people enjoy a wide range of age-appropriate activities that aid in their development of confidence, social skills and social relationships. Staff assist the young people to identify activities that they will enjoy. Some of the activities currently undertaken by young people are gymnastics, learning to play musical instruments, and playing for a local football club. One young person had a successful sleepover with a friend and looked forward to planning the next one.

Staff are instrumental in supporting young people to spend time safely with their parents. Staff often take parents to meetings about their child when they have no transportation available. This is a prime example of staff going above and beyond to ensure that parents are involved in the care of the young people.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
Young people say that they feel safe and trust staff to look after them. Any child protection concern is addressed with a robust response by staff, who are very confident in their knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures. Two allegations against staff were taken seriously and treated with urgency by management. Staff are well supported during any investigations undertaken and on their return to work.	

Records reflect that young people do not go missing, evidencing that they are happy living in the home. There have been no incidents of young people being exposed to child sexual exploitation or radicalisation. Staff have completed purposeful training in each area, ensuring that they are competent if an issue arises.

The designated officer for the council has no concerns regarding the safety and well-being of the young people.

Staff are well informed about potential risks to young people. Risk assessments are detailed, comprehensive and reviewed to ensure that new risks are responded to and that young people are given more freedom as risks reduce.

Staff help young people develop insight into their behaviours. The young people are helped to understand their triggers, preventing escalation. Sanctions, when imposed, are fair and reasonable and implemented with an opportunity to teach the young people the consequences of negative actions, such as paying for the cost of property damage.

Records indicate that a small number of physical interventions have been undertaken. Staff physically intervene as a last resort to keep young people from harming themselves or others. Incidents are documented and reviewed by management, ensuring that feedback from the young person is obtained.

There is particularly effective liaison with local police. They regularly make informal visits to the home to engage the young people. Young people learn to trust the police, as well as gaining advice and guidance from them. A young person enrolled in cadets after being positively influenced by his interactions with the local community officer.

Sound recruitment processes are in place, which include exploring gaps in employment histories and verifying references. This minimises the risk of unsuitable adults working with the young people.

The home and its surrounding grounds are maintained to a high level. All health and safety checks are up to date. Fire drills are periodically undertaken, testing staff's ability to evacuate young people quickly. Additional precautions, such as testing the temperature of food and ensuring that sharp knives and toxic chemical are stored away in locked cabinets, aid in preventing accidental injuries.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding
There is exceptional leadership and management in place, guiding the services of the home. The registered manager is a qualified social worker and has been in post since 1994, with an abundance of knowledge and experience in caring for young people. A long-time deputy manager retired last year and the long-term senior practitioner was promoted, ensuring the stability of the management team. Members of the management team clearly prioritise the needs of the young people and manage the staff effectively, allowing the home to function at a high level. They utilise creative thinking to assess how service delivery can be further developed even with a history of outstanding judgements. 'Over the past four years, the service has got stronger and stronger,' were the views expressed by a professional. Monitoring of the young people is thorough. Managers consistently review their progress against the quality of standards for children's home, while taking an active role in the young people's day-to-day routine. This process allows for precise planning and informed decision-making that benefits the young people. Routine monthly visits are conducted by the independent visitor, ensuring that reliable, constructive criticism is available for management. Reports reflecting the progress of the young people and staff practice are promptly submitted and provide reflection of the home from an external source. The four-monthly monitoring report produced by management is extensive and comprehensive. The document outlines the overall progress of the young people and how previous requirements and recommendations have been met, along with actions undertaken to address any identified shortcomings in staff practice. The statement of purpose, updated in January 2017, clearly outlines the ethos of the home, which is being met by staff. The young people's guide is a child-friendly document drafted in collaboration with the young people. It contains information such as a description of a typical day, how to complain, and other key information. To ease the anxiety, and answer questions of young people's families, a parents' and carers' handbook is offered. These documents help familiarise professionals, parents and young people with the service. The staff team is an exceptional attribute of the home. An experienced, stable and reliable staff team cares for the young people. The majority of its members are qualified and have worked in the home for a considerable number of years. They present as a cohesive unit and are committed to their assigned roles, and display	

high morale.

Staff receive sufficient amount of support to perform their duties. They look forward to informal and formal supervision that offers opportunities for constructive criticism regarding their practice. Staff speak highly of management's ability to develop their practice by implementing the latest research that has proven successful when working with young people.

Staff are provided opportunities to advance, even when there are no management positions available, for example supervising other staff and attending multi-agency professional networking meetings. Training is routinely monitored; however, the training matrix supplied was in need of update which was then done as result of this inspection.

Professionals believe that staff go above and beyond expectations to develop positive working relationships. Staff make them feel welcomed into the home and display a high level of professionalism when communicating on behalf of the young people. A social worker said, 'The staff are very keen to work in partnership and frequently consult about the young people.' Invitations are often extended to professionals to undertake specialised training with staff and to drop by the home to visit the young people on a more informal basis. Staff showed a small gesture of appreciation this past Christmas holiday when they presented social workers with gifts of chocolate and cards.

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 that 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 that 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 whom 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'.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for children looked after and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017