

Children's home – interim inspection

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Unique reference number	SC062651
Type of inspection	Interim
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Care Focus Limited
Registered provider address	Care Focus Ltd, 3rd Floor, 24 Chiswell Street, London EC1Y 4YX

Responsible individual	Jean Lloyd
Registered manager	Post vacant
Inspector	Fiona Littlefield

Inspection date	11/01/2017
Previous inspection judgement	Good
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection	
This home was judged Good at the full inspection. At this interim inspection, Ofsted judge that it has improved effectiveness. The management team has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection. Educational records for all the children are now available and are considered on a monthly basis as part of their overall progress. The manager has made progress in updating staff records, including training records. The children benefit from living together in a stable group. Since the last inspection, one child moved to another placement as part of an agreed plan. The staff speak fondly of him and are proud of the progress that he made. He remains in contact with them. The staff and the managers consider new referrals carefully, both to ensure that they can meet the children's needs and to evaluate the impact on the current group. On occasion, children move in from other homes within the same provider group, the goal being to offer a fresh start with other children of a similar age and educational level. This has proved to be successful, as the children show improved behaviour along with enhanced self-confidence and academic achievement. One child said this had given her the opportunity to, 'Get my life back on track'. A new manager has recently joined the home. She has previous management experience from working in other homes within the same organisation. The manager has a national vocational qualification level 3 and expects to complete her level 5 within six months. She is completing her application as registered manager and is clear about the timescales. The children respond to the manager warmly. She has made progress in building on existing improvements for the service. For instance, she is working to ensure that the children's file records are up to date, detailed and reflect the needs and progress of the individual child. However, some areas of this work are outstanding as staff have not completed pathway plans so that they identify a child's personal goals and the progress that they are making. The staff and the managers hold the safety of the children at the centre of their practice. They employ a variety of practical measures and a detailed knowledge of a child to build a protective relationship. All children have detailed risk assessments which are matched with management strategies and are regularly updated. The staff work as a team, sharing information, so that nothing is left to chance.	

As a result, the children are safeguarded, and their well-being is promoted. The staff receive regular supervision. However, the training records for the staff in the home are not up to date.

The low level of negative incidents, such as episodes of children going missing or the use of restraint, confirms that the atmosphere in the home is calm and well ordered. Although children may have a history of complex needs and challenging behaviour, they know what is expected of them and generally cooperate with the routines and boundaries. All the children go to the school on site, with high rates of attendance. The children are meeting their predicted grades and anticipating improved exam results. For many children who have a history of poor engagement with education, this means that they are starting to plan their futures more positively. A review of one child noted that although she was still troubled, she was maturing into a, 'Lovely determined child who was growing within herself, and seems to be proud of her progress.'

The staff are confident in their approach. They use opportunities from key-working sessions to compile a book of positive comments from the staff about the children. Mealtimes are lively. The children enjoy the banter with the staff and pick up important messages about keeping healthy. The children are encouraged to tackle any concerns straight away so that, although there are few formal complaints, the children know that staff will take their comments seriously. Consequently, they learn to express themselves confidently and get extra help when necessary.

Both professionals and parents speak highly of the partnership working that the staff and the managers promote. Social workers receive detailed monthly reports and comment that the staff respond immediately to any concerns. The children benefit from this integrated approach. Parents comment that the staff understand the value of relationships for both the children and the families and are supportive of contact arrangements in place.

Information about this children's home

This home is one of a small group of homes run by an independent provider. It offers care for up to four children. Education is available within the setting. The children have direct access to therapy as part of the services offered to them by the company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
31/05/2016	Full	Good
10/03/2015	Interim	Improved effectiveness
17/12/2014	Full	Good
20/03/2014	Interim	Good progress

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:

- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs, and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 53, paragraph 10.11) This is with particular reference to compiling an up-to-date record of training undertaken by staff in the home, including the dates when training needs to be updated.
- Ensure that all records are kept up to date, signed and dated by the author of each entry. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.3) This is with particular reference to pathway plans for children preparing for independence.

What the inspection judgements mean

At the interim inspection we make a judgement on whether the home has improved in effectiveness, sustained effectiveness, or declined in effectiveness since the previous full inspection. This is in line with the 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

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 who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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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