

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	7 June 2016
Unique reference number	SC063318
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered provider	Good Foundations Limited
Registered provider address	6 Tower Quays, Tower Road, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 1BP

Responsible individual	Andrew Mannix
Registered manager	Helen Beaumont
Inspector	Elaine Allison

Inspection date	7 June 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

SC063318

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people recognise that staff care about them and do everything that they can to help them to stay safe. As a result, young people experience improvement in their emotional well-being as well as their protection.
- Young people's education is well supported by staff, who are strong advocates for their learning. Young people have high attendance rates at school and college and work hard towards improving their achievements.
- The staff team and managers work very collaboratively with placing authorities, parents and other agencies. All feedback gained during this inspection was very positive. Such positive multi-agency working has led to improvements in the emotional well-being, social skills and educational achievements of young people.
- Young people are provided with very good support to address their emerging health needs.
- Staff are warm and sensitive, engaging young people to develop and sustain positive relationships with staff and one another.
- Staff understand risk extremely well and are helping young people to explore and improve their understanding of the impact of making unsafe choices. As a result, there is a reduction in young people being missing or being criminalised, and fewer violent incidents in the home.

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

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 (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
14: The care planning standard In order to meet the care planning standard the registered person must ensure that children— (1)(a) receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; (. (b) have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— (a) that children are admitted to the home only if their needs are within the range of needs of children for whom it is intended that the home is to provide care and accommodation, as set out in the home's statement of purpose;(b) that arrangements are in place to— (i) ensure the effective induction of each child into the home; (ii) manage and review the placement of each child in the home; and (iii) plan for, and help, each child to prepare to leave the home or to move into adult care in a way that is consistent with arrangements agreed with the child's placing authority This relates specifically to the placement plan which does not give appropriate instruction or direction for staff to meet the young person's needs (Regulation 14 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(i)(ii)(iii).	11 July 2016
36: Children's case records (1) The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which—	11 July 2016

(a) include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to each child (b) are kept up to date; and (c) are signed and dated by the author of each entry (Regulation 36 (1)(a)(b)(c)).	
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Recommendations

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

- Staff should be familiar with the home's policies on record keeping and understand the importance of careful, objective and clear recording. Staff should record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4).
- Staff should provide a nurturing environment that is welcoming, supportive and which provides appropriate boundaries in relation to their behaviour. Homes must also meet children's basic day-to-day needs and physical necessities. Staff should seek to meet the child's basic needs in the way that a good parent would, recognising that many children in residential care have experienced environments where these needs have not been consistently met – doing so is an important aspect of demonstrating that the staff care for the child and value them as an individual ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.7).
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. Where there are safeguarding concerns for a child, their placement plan, agreed between the home and their placing authority, must include details of the steps that the home will take to manage any assessed risks on a day-to-day basis ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5).

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a children's home for up to four young people with emotional or behavioural difficulties or learning disabilities. The home is owned and operated by a private company.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
17 February 2016	Interim	Improved effectiveness
1 December 2015	Full	Requires improvement
28 January 2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
24 June 2014	Full	Outstanding

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
There are good, supportive and nurturing relationships between young people and staff. The staff and managers demonstrate both perseverance and determination to work through challenging times with young people. They listen to young people and provide encouragement, positivity and guidance. Staff are optimistic and talk freely and passionately about the qualities and strengths of the young people that they care for. A social worker stated, 'In a very short period of time he has settled and is doing really well. The staff have got that knack which enables them to quickly form relationships.' A parent commented, 'He likes it there and gets on with the staff, they really care about him.' This has led to young people making good and sustained progress from some difficult starting points. Young people's life chances improve due to the registered manager and staff prioritising education and training. All young people are either attending school, college or training. Fully supported by staff, young people achieve and maintain good school attendance and remain on the right track to achieve success. A young person commented, 'I like it now because I am doing something I want to do and I'm hoping to get an apprenticeship.' Young people's health needs are met. Staff arrange primary healthcare appointments, such as with dentists, opticians and GPs, to ensure that the young people remain in good health. Annual health reviews take place within agreed timescales and any actions identified are undertaken immediately. The staff team demonstrates an in depth knowledge of the young people. Staff understand young people's moods and behaviours, leading to an insightful and empathetic approach to care practice. Young people's views are important to staff and are therefore listened to. A young person said, 'Of course we get our say, it's sound they listen to us.' Young people know how to complain and to make their feelings known to the registered manager and staff. The young people's guide details the complaints procedure. Young people also have access to advocates, independent visitors and their social workers, which means that they have adults to turn to if they are worried or concerned. Staff support and nurture young people's relationships with their families, friends and others who are important to them. A parent commented, 'They are very good at making sure we see each other and go out of their way to help us, like even giving me lifts to make sure it happens.' The young people have regular contact that is subject to careful assessment and monitoring, and deemed to be in their best interests. Staff members promote contact by providing the young people with both practical and emotional support. When considered appropriate, staff	

sensitively supervise contact between the young people and their families. Consequently, young people enjoy good-quality, safe contact with family and friends in the knowledge that staff are on hand to provide any assistance that may be required.

Young people take part in a wide range of social activities in the local community. This includes football and snooker. A young person said, 'I have just started playing for a footie team and the staff are taking me to get my new football boots, it's great.' This promotes the engagement and inclusion of young people in the local and wider community. It increases their sense of worth and self-confidence.

In general, the home environment is very clean, tidy and decorated to a very high standard. However, young people's bedrooms were unclean. There were clothes strewn across the floor and dirty plates with the remnants of old food left lying on the floor. Staff indicated that young people are encouraged to clean bedrooms as part of their incentive charts. However, when young people fail to do this staff should ensure that they encourage and support young people to develop their independence skills and enjoy a comfortable bedroom space.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Consistently robust compatibility risk assessments are not completed prior to young people moving into the home. This puts them and other young people at an increased level of risk. The home's own policy states, 'It is imperative that all permutations with regard to the dynamics and triggers between young people are explored and evidenced.' The registered manager has failed to undertake a rigorous evaluation of information provided by placing social workers and partner agencies pertaining to young people. This hinders the ability of staff to manage risk fully. Some placement plans are of a very good quality. They show clear direction and guidance for staff to follow to meet the individual needs of the young people. However, for one young person the plan was not effective because it lacked a sufficient level of information and analysis. Staff had failed to update his placement plan to reflect his current needs and increased levels of concern, since he had moved into the home. Therefore, the current plan was ineffective as this young person's placement within the home was due to end, as the provider had informed the local authority that they could no longer meet his emerging needs. Given the misinformation, lack of analysis and evaluation, effective planning could not take place. This shortfall prevents the staff being able to care for all the young people in a consistently safe manner. Bespoke and comprehensive individual risk assessments, including going missing from care, promote young people's safety and well-being. Young people are encouraged to take appropriate risks in line with their age and development, such	

as going to local football clubs and meeting up with peers from school. This helps to build their confidence and resilience. However, although staff had identified and acted on significant risks that had occurred in relation to a young person causing damage to the carpet with a lighter, they had failed to create written risk assessments, which clearly identify all current risks and appropriate management strategies. This may potentially place young people and staff at risk of harm.

Generally effective behaviour management helps to keep the young people safe. Young people are encouraged to behave well. They receive positive and constructive praise for good behaviour while receiving fair and balanced restorative consequences for negative behaviour. Staff implement clear and unwavering boundaries consistently, and this helps young people to develop an understanding of what acceptable behaviour is. The use of negotiation, discussion and compromise have become the preferred methods of resolving difficulties. Where sanctions are used, they are fair and proportionate. A young person commented, 'It's fair what they give us when we have been bad, we need something to happen, but they are always fair with all of us.' It was pleasing to see that the amount of rewards for good behaviour significantly outnumbered the sanctions. Young people are fully involved in their behaviour management plans and share with staff what particular strategies work for them in a time of emotional crisis. This ensures that young people are encouraged to display and maintain socially acceptable behaviour and are supported in times of crisis.

Professionals report excellent levels of communication between themselves and the home. An education professional said, 'They are very good at sharing with us any information on a day-to-day basis that may affect the young person in school that day. They have also asked us to work together on sharing good practice to make sure we are all using a consistent approach to negative or disruptive behaviour.' A social worker commented, 'The communication is second to none; they give verbal and written reports which are excellent. I am kept fully up to date with every detail in my young person's life.' This collaborative approach means that staff are working together to ensure that young people are kept safe.

Careful recruitment of staff helps to safeguard young people. Effective procedures and clear lines of accountability are followed, ensuring that only suitable adults work in the home. Staff members are well informed about their role in relation to safeguarding young people at the commencement of their employment. The staff receive a comprehensive induction programme that includes training in child protection and all aspects of safeguarding. Staff understand the wider safeguarding context, including the local safeguarding children's board and they have well-established relationships with key partner agencies. This helps to keep young people safe.

The registered manager has ensured that health and safety policies are reviewed in a timely manner. An updated fire risk assessment has been completed and evacuation procedures are consistently implemented. The registered manager has also completed risk assessments covering all activities undertaken by young people.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The suitably qualified and very experienced registered manager leads a stable, qualified and committed staff team to provide confident and nurturing care to young people. Staff describe the manager as 'fair', 'understanding' and 'approachable'. The staff and the manager share a common vision to improve young people's lives and prospects. Many professionals favourably recognise their energy and drive. A youth offending worker commented, 'They make sure that (name) makes his appointments, they are keen to make sure he doesn't get into any more trouble and support him in his appointments.' Staff receive regular professional supervision that is of high quality. A staff member commented, 'Before supervision, we pick two of the quality standards and we discuss in supervision how these relate to our work with the young people, it really helps to make sure we are doing all we can do.' Staff are accountable in their work with young people, and receive oversight and guidance from a manager that they trust and who is on hand to support them. Their care practice is regularly appraised and they receive a good level of training, which promotes their overall development. For example, all staff are now qualified to the required level. This results in young people receiving care from a well-trained and accountable staff team. Young people benefit from a staff group that communicates effectively. Staff members have mutually respectful professional relationships. Team meetings take place regularly, supported by a clear agenda where the young people's welfare and issues important to them are priorities. Staff members share experiences and reflect on effective strategies in caring for young people and on young people's individual experiences. New staff members benefit from the support of experienced members of staff. This helps them to settle quickly in the staff group, resulting in a well-coordinated and efficient staff group that harnesses its collective strengths for the benefit of the young people. The manager uses testimony from young people, information from professionals working with the home and from complaints to learn lessons with a view to improvement. This informs the home's development plan, which is focused on maintaining a high-quality service. Areas identified for improvement are actioned, which means that the home does not stagnate. As a result, young people receive services that the registered manager is constantly seeking to improve through using quality assurance processes. The appropriate authorities are notified immediately following all significant incidents. The manager understands the importance of making notifications regarding young people in a timely manner to agencies involved, and in taking	

appropriate action. However, not all incidents are recorded on the provider's 'incident reports'; this oversight makes it difficult for internal and external monitoring of practice to be undertaken. For example, sanctions given to young people following any incidents are not documented in incident reports. This makes it difficult to show the behaviour which led to the sanction being imposed. The incidents are recorded on the young person's 'daily sheets'. However, these lack sufficient detail or management oversight.

Furthermore, on some occasions, records on individual young people were not always recorded in a non-stigmatising way. This is not helpful to the young person, if they want to read their paperwork. Staff had not considered how this could affect young people reading their files. There were also instances where some of the home's records had not been dated. This made it difficult to ascertain when changes had occurred. For example, individual consent forms. While this did not impact directly on the care of young people, it is difficult for the manager in auditing and reviewing young people's care records.

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 looked after children 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 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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