

Inspection report for children's home

Unique reference number	SC063318
Inspector	Elaine Allison
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home

Registered person	Good Foundations Limited
Registered person address	6 Tower Quays Tower Road Birkenhead Merseyside CH41 1BP
Responsible individual	Andrew Mannix
Registered manager	Helen Rebecca Beaumont
Date of last inspection	18/03/2014

Inspection date	24/06/2014
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Previous inspection	satisfactory 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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This is a well-managed and effective service. Young people benefit from high quality and personalised care. A detailed approach to care planning, assessment and review ensures the specific and changing needs of each young person are met to an outstanding degree. The young people being cared for have excellent personal plans that demonstrate real insight into the health and well-being of their diverse needs. This is further supported by a dedicated staff team whose commitment and skills are highly praised by care professionals and the young people themselves. Young people are clearly an integral part of the home being given every opportunity to have their views considered in daily living. The atmosphere of the home is open and inclusive where young people learn to treat others with respect and understanding.

Observation of staff and young people interacting throughout the visit evidences there are good positive relationships between them and a genuine emotional connection. These types of relationships are vital to provide a secure base for young people to develop resilience and healthy attachments. This in turn supports the children and young people to develop all aspects of their health and wellbeing. Staff are aware of young people's strengths and vulnerabilities and help to nurture their talents and interests.

Excellent consideration is given to young people prior to them living at the home.

Young people have the opportunity to visit the home, meet with staff and other young people and have a tour of the home and surrounding area. One young person commented 'I visited before I came here to live and got to pick what colour my bedroom was painted and chose my duvets and things. When I came in to live here it was all done'.

Excellent attention is given to communication within the staff team which helps to ensure the whole team are well-informed of young people's views and expectations concerning individual events and plans, both day-to-day and longer term.

The culture of the organisation is evident from the top down. The service has developed a positive culture by having creative leadership that supports staff and has the ability to collaborate with all agencies and build relationships with stakeholders. This has supported the outcomes for the young people cared for identified in their personal plans.

The management and staff are committed and have quality assurance systems and processes in place to ensure they continue to assess and improve the quality of the service provided.

As a result of this inspection areas of development are that the home ensure young people have suitable access to social media and the internet.

Full report

Information about this children's home

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

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/03/2014	Interim	satisfactory progress
20/12/2013	Full	outstanding
25/03/2013	Interim	satisfactory progress
16/11/2012	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 children take part in appropriate peer activities as agreed by the home staff in a way similar to how a reasonable parent might reach agreement with their children, taking into account any assessment of risk to the child; in particular ensure children have suitable access to social media and the internet (NMS 7.5)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for children and young people **outstanding**

Incidents of young people going missing from home have reduced. Staff discuss with young people the reasons they may go missing, such as wishing to maintain contact with their local communities, and do their best to resolve these. When young people do go missing, staff take immediate action, including liaising with the police, going out looking for them, to ensure young people's welfare is protected and they return quickly and safely. Staff do their best to balance risk management with providing young people with appropriate levels of support and supervision. They remain vigilant to identify and record emerging risks to young people. For example, they keep company with those who are of low mood, to distract them from thinking about harmful activity. A young person commented 'when I feel down staff help bring me back up, I've always got someone to talk to during the day and in the middle of the night'.

Staff offer skilled and sensitive intervention and re-direction to young people whose behaviour challenges the safety or welfare of others. By treating young people fairly and with respect, they help them identify the best ways to take responsibility for their behaviour. Staff have a good understanding of the dynamics of relationships between young people, intervening effectively when relationships between young people deteriorate. One young person commented 'I am much better at controlling my temper cos the staff know what sets me off on one and help me to calm down'.

Most young people understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, and according to their age and ability take responsibility for their own health. Some young people engage in sports activities such as golf and regular gym activity, to help them stay fit. Staff work very hard at finding inventive ways of engaging young people in healthy pursuits, such as frequent walks to the local park to make use of fitness equipment.

All young people are offered prompt access to professional consultation and guidance on a range of health and social issues including sexual health, relationships and emotional wellbeing. Young people attend routine health appointments and, with staff encouragement, reduce their involvement in behaviour that damages their health, such as smoking cessation.

Young people are making progress with their education or opportunities for work experience. Some young people attend school after prolonged absence. They benefit from support available to them when they are not happy at school, because staff promote their views in meetings with education professionals.

Young people benefit from appropriate contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them; these contacts are managed sensitively. Restrictions on visits are in place where needed and contact can be supervised and

supported. A parent commented 'I cannot thank the staff at the home enough, they have worked with us as a family to improve our contact and now we manage to have unsupervised contact which has helped us bond as a family again'. High priority has been given to facilitating and supporting appropriate family contact in a way which helps young people to stay safe. This included additional support with travel arrangements to help family members overcome difficulties arising from distance and location. Proper account was taken of individual circumstances and the young person's care plan. There is real progress achieved in family relationships due to the warm welcome and support offered by staff at the home.

As well as excellent opportunities for group participation in young people's meetings, young people are very well-able to describe their involvement in care planning meetings. It was clear that these included open and honest discussion, appropriate to age and stage, about individual needs, behaviour patterns and things that place young people at risk. Young people's comments confirm that such discussions are extremely person centred and helpful in making them feel understood, safe and supported. Young people's comments included 'they're definitely interested in my views', 'this is the first place that has helped me get my voice heard in my meetings'.

The home does not have a computer with internet access for young people to utilise. This means that some young people living in the home do not have the same opportunity as their peers to use a variety of social media networks. As in some cases the young people are placed a long way from their homes this impacts on their friendships outside the home and 'keeping in touch' with family members.

Quality of care

outstanding

Risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide dynamic tools which help staff to be mindful of current risks and behaviours and agree means of managing these safely. Excellent attention has been given to identifying with young people strategies that would help them to feel safe. Young people acknowledged they had sometimes needed a lot of support and their comments include 'Staff helped me to sort myself out and I think that I am a nicer person now'.

Young people live in a home where staff do their utmost to protect them from harm. Staff use their knowledge and understanding of how to protect young people from abuse and harm, and when necessary foster good links with other professionals who support the welfare of young people. When young people present additional risk, for example due to self-harm, staff respond with planned strategies to minimise the impact of the behaviour, both for the individual concerned, and for others who may be affected by the additional risk.

Young people are encouraged to develop their emotional well-being because they benefit from regular, high quality discussions with their key workers. As a result, they form strong attachments to the staff team and are able to discuss a range of

feelings, worries and concerns. Detailed records of key working discussions are held securely in the home. This ensures that staff are able to work consistently and know of any matters affecting the progress that young people make.

Staff make effective use of 'life story' books for young people. This allows young people to have a sense of belonging and identity. Young people commented 'I love putting my photo's in my book because it is good to have happy memories'.

Staff liaise effectively with education professionals to identify appropriate school placements for young people. A parent commented 'staff have worked very hard to find the right education and to keep (names young person) going to school on a regular basis. I can see a huge improvement not only in education but in how much more confident my child is'.

The home provides a safe and comfortable environment which is domestic in scale and appearance. Excellent attention is given to maintaining the premises and this includes regular health and safety audits. Young people described the home as 'just like anybody else's house', 'the best looking house on the street' and 'I love living here it's just like a big family'.

There are regular staff meetings. Staff consider these as important both in terms of allowing for better communication and for information sharing ensuring continuity of care for the young people. A staff member commented "as a staff team we make sure that we talk to each other to ensure that the young people get a consistent, fair approach from all of us".

Staff impressed as highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work. They obtain a great deal of satisfaction from their employment at the home. A placing social worker commented 'the staff team present as committed to promoting the young person's development and provide him with the opportunities to progress personally and socially'. A parent commented 'I look forward to my contact visits and the staff are always very respectful towards us'.

Medication, where used, is safely stored and carefully administered. Detailed records of medication are routinely checked for accuracy. This ensures that any errors are quickly identified and promptly resolved.

The service's 'development plan' was up to date and demonstrated a commitment by managers and staff to continually evaluate and improve the service and outcomes for young people.

Keeping children and young people safe **outstanding**

The service had in place relevant policies and procedures to ensure a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Minimum Standards, legislation and best practice. There was a policy and procedure in relation to staff recruitment to ensure that all staff were recruited and inducted in a safe and robust manner and children and young people are protected.

The service is excellent at keeping children and young people safe and feeling safe. Each young person has a detailed behaviour management plan in place. This contains strategies needed to encourage positive behaviour. These plans are effective and young people's abilities to manage their own behaviour have improved as a result of their successful implementation. Where sanctions are used, they are fair and proportionate. Young people commented, 'I feel safe here, the staff are great at looking after us', 'if I get a sanction then I probably deserved it, to be honest'.

When serious incidents occur, the staff team ensure that prompt and appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of young people. Furthermore, all required serious incident notifications are made to the appropriate services. As a result, young people's safety is promoted at all times.

All staff have completed a period of induction and completed a full programme of mandatory training including, child protection and health and safety. A staff member commented 'I found the induction programme gave me a good overview of the company policies and procedures and found that it has enhanced my practice'. This ensures that staff possess the required knowledge, skills and expertise to care for the children and young people who use the service.

Staff commented that regular team meetings took place where they had the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Staff training records provide a written record of when individual staff have completed training and when it requires updating.

Young people benefit from a stable staff team. Numerous risk assessments, including individual risk assessments and safety checks of the premises and fire equipment ensure that the young people live in a safe home. Fire drills are undertaken on a weekly basis to ensure everyone is up to date with emergency procedures. The systems operated in the home and the attention given to the detail of each young person's needs and vulnerabilities ensure that their safety is promoted to an excellent standard.

Risk assessments outline what measures need to be in place to support the young people in their environment, in the community and in various activities. These ensure that the welfare and safety of the young people is not compromised and is maintained to a good standard. Entry to the house was limited, the doors were secure and visitors were asked for identification and were required to sign a visitors book, therefore the young people are kept safe.

Leadership and management

outstanding

The Registered Manager has been in post since 2011. She is suitably qualified to undertake her responsibilities, with an NVQ Level 5 qualification in management.

Young people live in a home that is effectively managed in their best interests. The manager and staff clearly have a strong commitment to delivering exceptionally good childcare practice tailored to the personal needs of the young people they look after. The effectiveness of this approach was evident in the excellent progress young people have made. Management and staff demonstrated, through discussions and within records that regular checks are carried out across different aspects of the care being provided at the home.

Where appropriate, family and friends are encouraged to visit young people in the home and spend time with them there. This creates a feeling of an open and transparent culture within the service which helps to ensure the quality of the service is maintained.

Staff have a wide range of skills, which they use to provide opportunities for young people to extend their experiences, develop new skills and acquire knowledge which will be of value in their adult life. Staff are well trained and receive strong support through supervision and appraisal. Staff say there is a supportive culture which results in a high level of consistency in their delivery of care for young people. A staff member commented 'the manager is very supportive, knowledgeable and really cares about the young people'.

Staff and management keep up to date with new practice developments to make improvements. Rigorous and robust monthly monitoring takes place through a comprehensive quality assurance system. This includes consultation with young people and an evaluative approach to regulation 33 monitoring. This ensures that young people have their welfare promoted and protected.

Overall, the home's written records are completed and audited to an excellent standard, being stored with due regard for confidentiality. The well-structured files and care plans give a very good oversight of each young person's progress and history of their time at the home.

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.